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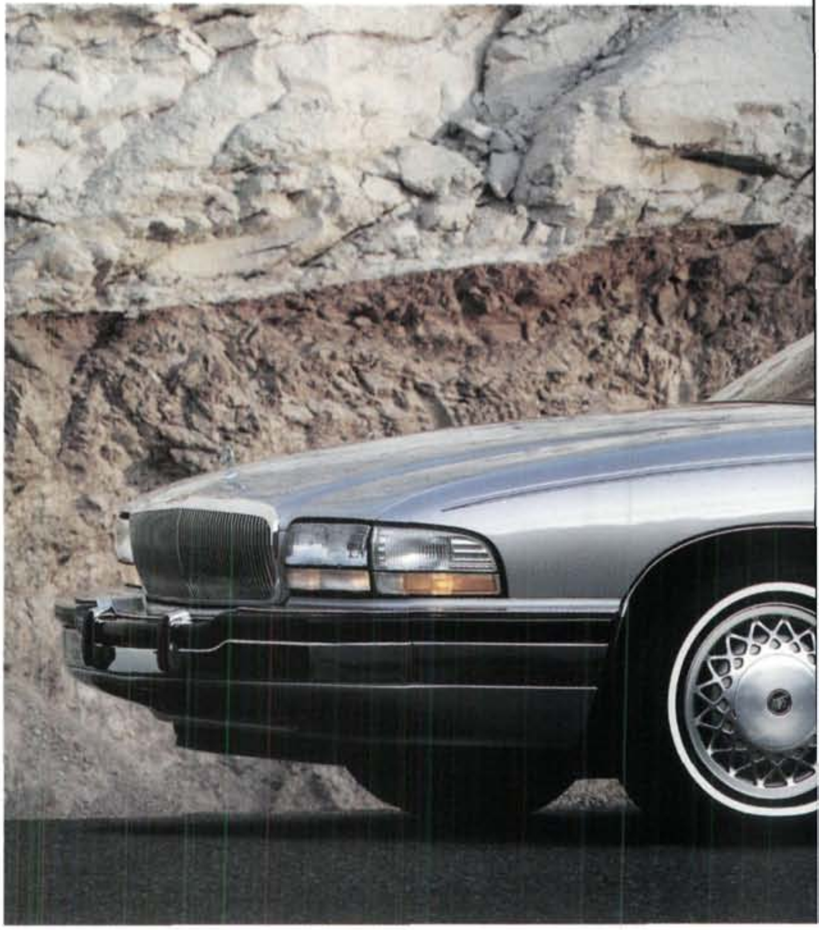

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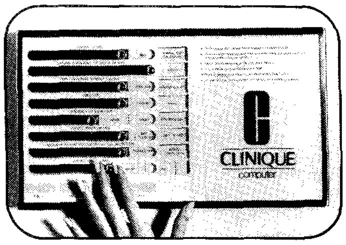

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

THE story goes that Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, out of town with the Irving Berlin musical "Call Me Madam," were tinkering with their libretto for the show, even though its New York opening was imminent. Ethel Merman, however, wasn't having any. When presented with the pair's changes, the testy actress refused them, supposedly replying, "I am Miss Birds Eye of 1950. I *am frozen!*" In fact, veteran theatregoers tell us that, great as she was, Merman's performances tended not to evolve very much during a show's run. This fact came to mind the other night when we went back to see the current revival of "Gypsy," another musical in which Merman had romped. At first, we'd resisted returning, fearing that the production might have been stricken with the Merman syndrome—stasis—and therefore might be less worthy of our attention than several smaller shows we'd been meaning to catch up with. But a friend insisted: it was Tyne Daly's last weekend as Mama Rose before turning the role over to another TV-associated actress (Linda Lavin, of "Alice" fame).

We needn't have worried, it turned out. Virtually everything about the show had gotten better over its nine-month Broadway run. The orchestral playing, under Eric Stern's direction, was tighter. Changes of scenery were brisker. Virtually everyone, from Jonathan Hadary's Herbie to Caroline, the vaudeville moo cow, had acquired valuable shadings. And the performance of Miss Daly, who may next reprise the part in London (in the company of Crista Moore's Louise), had progressed as well. When the curtain fell on Rose's look of blank, unmistakable madness—much more unsettling than we'd remembered—we, like everyone else, applauded warmly. As we made our way to the exit, we narrowly avoided colliding with Tom O'Malley, a young New York Met who'd turned in a great performance of his own at Shea the day before, and who was enjoying a rare night out. O'Malley was humming "Everything's Coming Up Roses" airily, and we couldn't help but wonder whether he'll be humming it again, for good luck, in the dugout during the dog days.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Light Up the Sky—A revival of Moss Hart's 1948 comedy, with Peggy Cass, Charles Keating, Bill McCutcheon, and Bruce Weitz. In previews. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

Quiet on the Set—A comedy by Terrell Anthony. In previews. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Richard III—Denzel Washington has the title role in the second, and final, offering of the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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12	13	14	15			

NEW THIS SEASON

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a sort of monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**audience**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**catastrophe**—*is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel* when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Falsettoland—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a bar mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine; Chip Zien is very good as a benign psychiatrist. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Aug. 12.)

Festival Latino—A theatrical *celebración* (through Aug. 26), featuring plays from Latin America and the United States. Unless otherwise noted, all performances are in Spanish, with simultaneous translation available on selected dates. The schedule: The Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park production of; "¿De Dónde?," by Mary Gallagher, Aug. 7-12. In English. . . . ¶ "Sin Testigos," an adaptation by Inda Ledesma (an Argentine actress-director) of a work by Sofia Prokofieva, Aug. 10-17. . . . ¶ "El Palomar," by Carlos Catania, presented by Costa Rica's Grupo Encuentro, Aug. 14-19. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

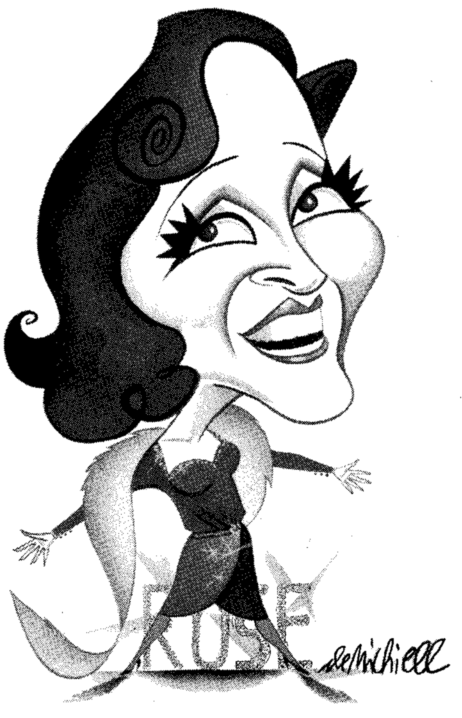
Further Mo'—This lively, touching, and brilliantly performed small-scale musical, set in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1927, is a real gem. Written by Vernel Bagneris (who also stars), it uses blues singing (mostly quite *recherché songs) to say something about the* plight of the black entertainer in American history and culture. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

The Grapes of Wrath—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton *Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective* in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Philadelphia, Here I Come—Brian Friel's wonderfully funny and touching play about a young man from a small Irish village on the eve of his departure for America really holds up in Paul Weidner's beautiful production. Grab this one: revivals this good don't come around often. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)



Linda Lavin in "Gypsy"

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want? (Miss Channing leaves the cast after the Aug. 11 performance. Kelly Bishop fills in from Aug. 13 to Aug. 18, and Swoosie Kurtz takes over the role starting Aug. 20.) (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

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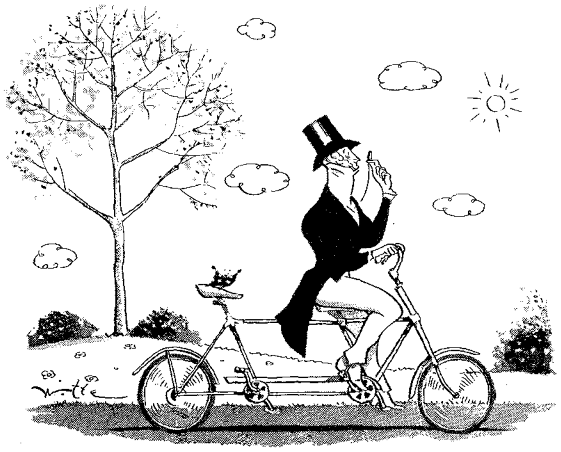
SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

SPUNK—George C. Wolfe has adapted three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, set in Harlem and the South, to make a gorgeous jazz-and-blues entertainment, giving them a powerful injection of his own mordant humor. Chic Street Man, singer and guitarist, wrote the dynamic score. With Ann Duquesnay (singer), and Victor Mack, Reggie Montgomery, Kevin Jackson, and Danitra Vance (actors). Mr. Wolfe directed. (5/7/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)



TRU—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while LaVern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirtieth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Mary McDonnell, Kairo Salem, and Christine Estabrook. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. With Steven Keats, Priscilla Lopez, and Arch Johnson. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

PASSERSBY in Central Park can see over the fence around Tavern on the Green's garden to where a little stage has been erected for the restaurant's performing-arts festival this summer. When Clint Smith makes his entrance in the "Beauty and the Beast" pas de deux that he and Alice Farley will present there through September 2, the parkside reactions range from smiles to horrified shrieks. Nearly everyone looks twice, though, because Mr. Smith's head, encased in a monstrous minotaur's mask with a muzzle dribbling strings of pearls, is about ten feet off the stage floor.

What people seated in the garden also see is that the Beast's arms and legs are shaped like a deer's and measure about five feet. Mr. Smith is performing on stilts, four in this case; when he finally partners Beauty (Miss Farley, who has also designed the costumes), it becomes clear that he is performing as a classical ballet dancer of twenty years' training, and is listening carefully to his music. In the course of this pas de deux and another, to Tchaikovsky's "Waltz of the Flowers," which Mr. Smith dances at alternate performances with Margaret Liston, you will encounter glissades, chassés, bourrées, chaînés, sautés, développés, dégagés, supported promenades, every sort of port de bras and épaulement, and New York's most spectacular attitudes and arabesques, to which the phrase "They're almost all legs" applies literally. There are many more dances in the repertory of Friends in High Places, the stilt-dancing company co-founded in 1981 by Coralie Romanyshyn and Mr. Smith (also a founding member of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo). In some of them, the dancers execute fish dives and shoulder lifts; in others, they do such virtuoso turns as going into a split on stilts and then, without dropping a beat, getting out of it.

In their trailer after the show, Mr. Smith and Miss Farley filled us in on stilt-dancing basics. Stilt-walking is a variation on regular walking—on falling and recovering your balance—but with a super-long stride and on appendages that can weigh up to three and a half pounds per leg. "To be able to recover on the right musical count is what we aim for," Mr. Smith said. He added that about eight years ago George Balanchine had seen Friends in High Places perform outdoors, in Lincoln Center Plaza. As Mr. Balanchine passed close by, the stilt dancers acknowledged him from their height with deep révérences. The choreographer turned to his companion and said, "Are they some of ours?"

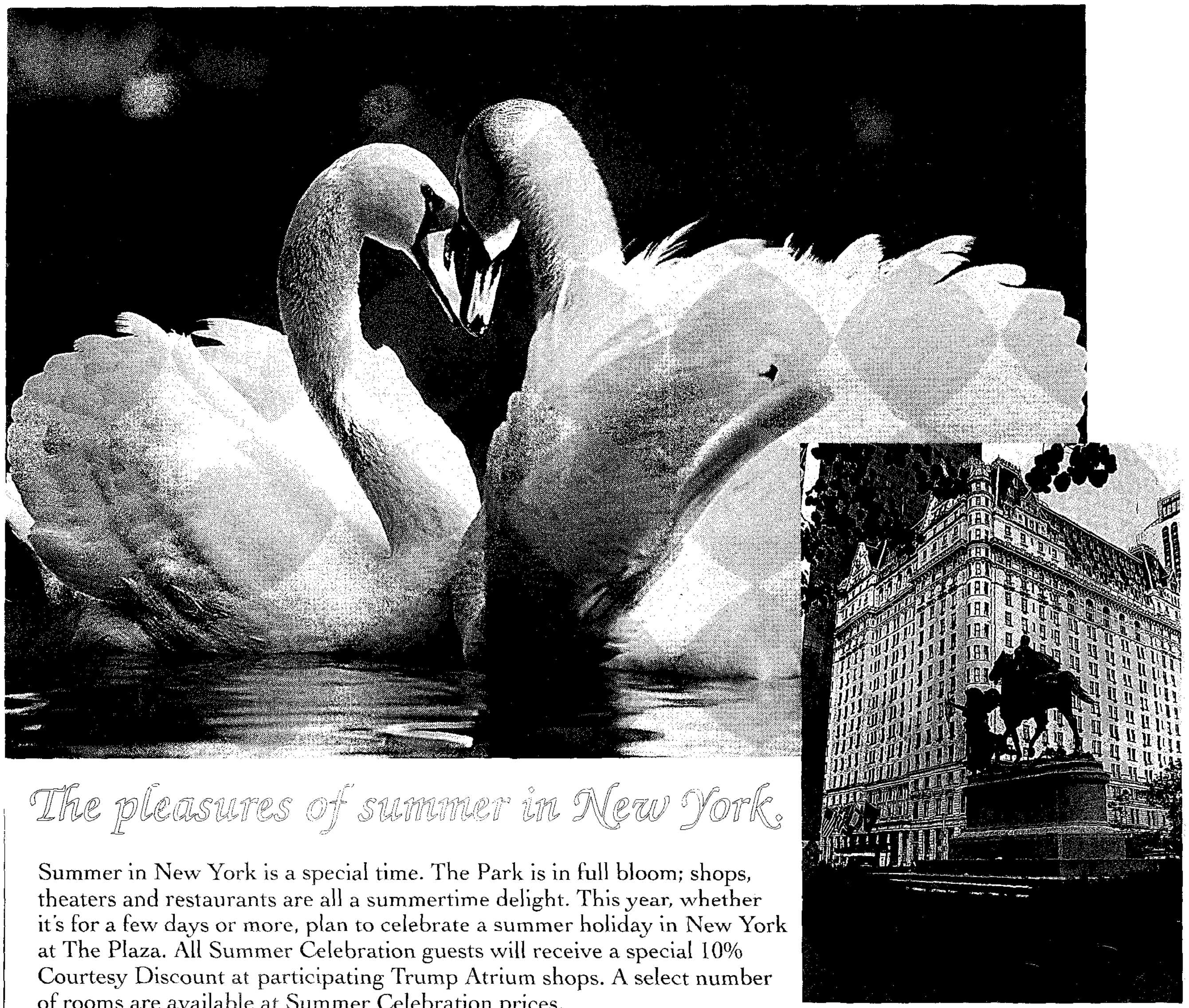
JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL—The Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Aug. 7-11. . . . ¶ The Muntu Dance Theatre, Aug. 7-11. . . . ¶ Aug. 14-25: The Hubbard Street Dance Company. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

NOT long ago, we stopped by the Spiral—a tiny, three-month-old club on Houston Street at Avenue A—and took in a set. It was close to midnight when we arrived, and the stage was occupied by a pair of guitarists. The duo's country and blues stylings had drawn an intent crowd of fifteen or twenty people, but as far as we could tell the musicians were just awful. The singer was tall and lanky and, from a distance, looked like a stick figure or a capital "K." He was sporting a latter-day greaser look: slicked-back hair, black leather pants, a sleeveless bowling shirt, and a score of bizarre tattoos—rub-ons?—that included the head of a steer and a cobweb.

Periodically during the set, a couple of women in the audience—one wearing torn fish-net stockings, the other a summery, skull-patterned dress—jumped up, took a couple of pictures with Instamatics, and sat back down. At one point, the singer, who we gathered was not much of a talker, introduced a number by deadpanning, "I'd like to sing a song for a friend of mine named Wayne." At another, he introduced his lead guitarist—a mysterious, black-clad figure who wore a hat and whose face we never saw—by saying, "He bats right, he throws right, and he's my personal physician." After each song, the duo got a considerable round of applause. Utterly baffled, we drifted downstairs to the poolroom, where a jukebox was cranking out "I Am Woman." Helen Reddy never sounded so good.

The Plaza Presents



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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. (864-0372)—On Wednesdays, the theatre presents Amateur Night, a continuation of the legendary show that has launched the careers of such performers as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. Vocalists, dancers, musicians, and comedians participate. It's a chance to file away a memory for a later "I knew him/her when." Show time is seven-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **Betty Garrett,** an actress and singer, continues through Aug. 12. Ms. Garrett has some hefty stage and screen credits, stretching back to the era of such M-G-M musicals as "On the Town" and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." And remember the Dingbat's pal Irene on "All in the Family"? That was Betty, too. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and Sundays at three.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The free passes to this club could pave most of Greenwich Village—and they often do. The Bitter End was all abuzz in the seventies, when it was a stopping point for the sort of singers whose records you can now order from television: Gordon Lightfoot, Melissa Manchester, Neil Sedaka. Aside from the rest rooms, which are what you'd expect to find during wartime, the place is pleasant enough. There's a platinum record from Blood, Sweat, & Tears, and a doorman who, when you ask what time the band's coming on, will tell you anything you want to hear.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A glitzy, color-coördinated jazz house, designed for maximum seating efficiency, where blue-suspendered waitresses sweep by your table bearing shrimp cocktails, champagne, and other trappings of the good life. Keyboardist **Joe Zawinul,** the one-time co-leader of Weather Report, leads an outfit Aug. 7-12; the **Yellowjackets,** a group that blends pop, soul, and jazz, begins work on Aug. 14. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The **Jamaica Boys** are slated for Aug. 7-8; **Sun Ra,** the celestial madman of jazz, performs with his Arkestra on Aug. 10; and the **Randy Brecker Group** claims Aug. 11. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. The trio of **Bobby Watson** (saxophone), **Richard Wyands** (piano), and **Ray Drummond** (bass) is in effect through Aug. 11. Beginning Aug. 13, pianist **James Williams** works with bassist **Robert Hurst** and drummer **Tony Reedus.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal acts, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. The Harlem Blues and Jazz Band is in charge on Aug. 12. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this low-ceilinged, stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. The **Stanley Cowell** foursome is on the bandstand Aug. 7-12; **Buddy De Franco's** quartet, featuring guitarist **Joe Beck,** begins a six-nighter on Aug. 14. Music after ten.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—there's a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. Highlights: The **Senders** on Aug. 10, and the **Niagaras** on Aug. 13. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven. Dining.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy. The **Ralph Moore** quintet is in Aug. 7-12, and singer **Helen Merrill** begins on Aug. 14. Ms. Merrill, who was popular in jazz circles in the fifties and only recently began performing in New York again, has a cool, vibratoless voice that is especially affecting on ballads; her singing often has a quality of airy solitude that brings to mind Miles Davis's or Chet Baker's trumpet playing. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Chinese food served in a plush greenhouse setting. Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of potted greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. Guitarist **Peter Leitch** and bassist **Harvie Swartz** hold sway Aug. 7-12. **Dave Mc Kenna,** who has been called in these pages "the hardest-swinging jazz pianist of all time," begins a week-plus stay on Aug. 14. Music starts at eight Mondays through Saturdays, and at seven on Sundays.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond-wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC. Code Blue claims Aug. 8, and singer Allyson Williams is on hand Aug. 10-11, with Dwight Sills. Music after nine.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. Pianist **Pete Malinverni** and bassist **Dennis Irwin** perform Aug. 7-11, followed by pianist **Adam Makowicz** and bassist **Jamil Nasser** starting Aug. 14. Music from about nine-thirty.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry-potato chip hybrids. The Big Man, **Clarence Clemons,** is here on Aug. 8. This sweatbanded sax player, who for years shimmied stage right wherever the Boss held court, released his third solo effort a while back. Bluesman **Albert King,** who has been at it for some fifty years, appears Aug. 10-11. Music after nine. Dining.

SMASH THE PMRC NOW!
ROSENWALD

Sonic Youth at Roseland

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. **Clarence (Gatemouth) Brown** claims Aug. 8-9, and the **Robert Ross Blues Band** is in action Aug. 10-11. Mondays belong to Bill Sims and the Cold Blooded Blues Band. Shows begin at nine-fifteen.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club just off the West Side Highway (and no relation to the famed London venue). The scheme is black walls, a high ceiling, an upstairs with tables and a view, and a booming sound system that sounds great when the d.j. is in charge but can be dicey for live music. Aug. 9: Revenge and Died Pretty. Aug. 10: Dread Zeppelin. Aug. 15: **Modern English.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home. **Alex Chilton,** who is here on Aug. 9, hasn't put out a record since 1987's "High Priest," but his rare local appearances are always a hoot. You never know what he'll have in his arsenal: he's a master of kitsch covers of songs like "Chances Are," and his shows over the past few years have become increasingly impish. **Celibate Rifles** perform on Aug. 12.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. **Rupert Holmes,** a prolific singer-songwriter who won a Tony for his score for "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," and whose songs have been covered by, among others, Barry Manilow, Dionne Warwick, and the Barbra, is currently in residence. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs about eight dollars. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" Brooklyn-bred baritone **Julius La Rosa**—whom Arthur Godfrey discovered in an officers' club in Pensacola—works through Aug. 11. **Barbara Mc Nair** kicks off on Aug. 14. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio; Tuesdays to **Vince Giordano & the Nighthawks,** a thirties-swing outfit; Fridays to Rick Hardeman and the Basin Street Six; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers. The Sam Ulano quartet takes the bandstand on Aug. 12. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—An elegant, De Mille-scale ballroom on the northern frontier of the theatre district. For gut-bashing, primordial and feedback-crazy rock and roll, **Sonic Youth,** here Aug. 10 at 8,

PIPE DREAMS

If not for Joe Humeres and Victor Ortiz, the city's skateboarders and freestyle bike riders would still be jumping over abandoned cars in empty lots or riding up any smooth walls they could find. Mr. Humeres, an expert skateboarder, and Mr. Ortiz, an expert biker, are the Parks Department "recreation specialists" responsible for transforming an unused city ice rink three blocks north of Yankee Stadium, on River Avenue at 164th Street, into the Northeast's first public skateboard-and-freestyle-bike performance-and-practice facility. They opened last summer with only a few ramps and obstacles, and this summer they have added a half pipe (its sides reach nine feet), a quarter pipe, and a spine ramp (two curves that meet in a point—performers ride up one side and fly over the other), as well as wooden replicas of the walls and parking-lot dividers that many riders cut their teeth on. The season's second set of bike trials and first skateboard contest will be held on August 18 and 19, respectively, and championships in both categories will take place on September 8 and 9. In between, the rink is open to the public—every day, from noon to 8.

"Kids who've turned themselves into great street freestylers are coming up here now and taking their first real half-pipe rides," Mr. Humeres says. "They get vertical, and they have so much fun I can't tell you. I lose sleep just thinking about it."

can't be beat. The twin guitar commandos Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo, along with drummer Steve Shelley and Godzilla bassist Kim Gordon, have developed a sound so frenzied, so overwhelmingly primitive, that they've become a gang of aural terrorists. Like the Pixies, they can, at times, be unreasonably abrasive. Sonic Youth's new album, "Goo," however, is an exceptional, malevolent rock record that dispenses with a lot of their feedback indulgences—they've saved that for their bash-your-brains-against-the-wall live shows. (You've been warned.) The band's best songs kick with hard-pounding chords of garage-rock brilliance; in concert, they're a thunderous, metal-twisting mess.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. Aug. 8: Johnny y Ray. Aug. 9: Les Amazones de Guinea. Aug. 10-11: **MARGARETH MENEZES.** Aug. 14: Azymuth. Aug. 15: The **JUNGLE BROTHERS.** Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. Aug. 7-12 is the property of bassist **RICHARD DAVIS'S** band. The South African pianist, flutist, and bandleader **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** takes command on Aug. 14. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Aug. 10 belongs to **LOUP GAROU,** and Aug. 12 to **LAVERNE BAKER.**

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A windowless, pie-shaped basement with an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. **ARTHUR BLYTHE'S** quintet sets the pace through Aug. 12; the **SHIRLEY HORN** trio gets under way on Aug. 14. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Zanzibar & Grill, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly, and the palm trees rustle tropically, and the jukebox contains Xavier Cugat and Perez Prado, and a waiter, delivering a plate of fried chicken and maple-pear corn bread to a customer, sings "It's suppertime" (to the tune of "Summertime"). The professional musicians tend to come on at around nine. Aug. 8-9 is in the hands of the **BRUBECK-LAVERNE TRIO,** with Danny and Chris Brubeck and Andy Laverne. The Roy Gerson septet takes hold on Aug. 13, and **WARREN VACHÉ'S** foursome comes in Aug. 14-15.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist **JOHN BUNCH** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** work through Aug. 11. Pianist **JANE JARVIS** and bassist **FRANK TATE** commence on Aug. 13. Music from eight weeknights.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

ARENA used to be an icehouse. Cool. Hardly a fresh joke, but always an essential topic in L.A., because its inhabitants achieve it so rarely. It's not their fault. The elements are against them.

New Yorkers need a full wardrobe if they're to be noticed amid the encroaching granite. But a T-shirt and a pair of Eddie Bauer khakis pass anywhere in happy sunlight, while the architectural dynamics of Yamamoto look oh-so-severe. (Anne-Marie Perse, a buyer at Maxfield, the town's most distinctive retailer [it's owned by her husband], was once asked where she sees Maxfield's clothes once they leave the store. "I don't know," she replied. "I think people wear them at home, at dinner parties.") All-black needs the backdrop of Manhattan in February to be truly dramatic. Against a panorama of red Miatas, pink and écru furniture, green oxidized L.A. Eyeworks frames, white boots, blue cutoffs, blond hair (even brown looks dyed here), and tan skin, wearers of black ensembles look like they need to be colored in. Consequently, in L.A. at night, the wrong people have the edge.

But that didn't stop revellers at Arena the night the new, extremely handsome and extremely designed-for-L.A. club (6655 Santa Monica Boulevard) threw a party for Thierry Mugler. They seriously peacocked out. Very seriously. "Ohmygawd," shrieked one woman barely up the steps to the V.I.P. room, when someone behind her offered to adjust her exposed label. "This is Gaultier! I can't wear Gaultier to a Thierry Mugler party! Brett, give me the car keys." Brett and several others managed to prevent her rapid return home for a costume change, but she stayed plastered against the room's soaring walls, far away from the guest of honor, for the rest of the evening.

You want to know who wears all that gauze you see in Bergdorf's but don't dare don? Come to L.A. "Is very sheer tonight, you think?" Mugler observed in his constantly amused-on-wry voice, while wearing one of his basic-red blazers. "I'm flattered." Others hovered round him wearing enough layers to ward off sleet or perform several veil dances if the urge struck them. When asked if guests should wear less, Mugler just smiled. "Let's dance. And take all this stuff off." With that, he descended the circuitous ramp that rims the club, threw his jacket behind a speaker, and got down. Of course, others followed. "He looks so natural," said a woman in lamé mesh, having trouble with her bell sleeves on "Vogue." "Not like a designer at all. Like a guy." That's the idea.

ART

"THE revolution of content," Mayakovsky wrote, "is unthinkable without a revolution of form," and MOMA's current exhibition of a hundred and fifty architectural drawings of the Russian avant-garde has to do with the thinkable. In this invigorating and unusually cogent show, we are given vivid pictures of several Russias, utopian and pragmatic, that might have been. We also run across the Russia that was more or less decided on by Stalin, though never built with quite the grandiloquence of, say, a 1931 proposal by the team of Gelfreikh and Shchuko for a humongous and fortresslike "Palace of Soviets," in which some of the more instantly recognizable, Byzantine-Gothic motifs of the Doges' Palace, in Venice, are amplified with such uncouth militarism as to suggest a new bureaucracy made up of bellowing, paper-shredding Vulcans.

Konstantin Melnikov's drawing "Bureau of the Newspaper Leningrad Pravda" is another story. In this irregular, light-filled tower, whose floors are designed to rotate on an axis, we find the International Style at its functional and formal best. The Constructivists' Russia of the twenties looked westward, to the rest of Europe. In several drawings we feel the effects of Cubism, or, in the case of "Cottage Housing for Workers," by Alexander Gegello, the forceful diagonals of Antoni Gaudí. With Ivan Leonidov's 1930 design for a center for physical education (part of a projected "palace of culture") we may think we're seeing an early version of I. M. Pei's new glass pyramid at the Louvre. But two eccentric projects give off the best whiff of what Soviet-style easy living might be: Moisei Ginzburg's gently undulating 1933 perspective for the V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre, where rehearsal breaks and intermissions were to be taken on balconies and chaise longues; and Nikolai Sokolov's fanciful, bright-colored and loose-wristed 1928 drawing for a health-resort hotel, whose cylindrical cabins appear to be on Popsicle sticks, and located in some Baltic Fire Island of the mind.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Art of Central Africa" is a dense and compact show drawn from the nineteenth-century holdings of the Museum für Völkerkunde, in Berlin, and includes some of the finest works known from Angola, the People's Republic of Congo, and southern Zaire. The range is quite extraordinary, but the strongest works are the "power figures," which were used for curing afflictions and for revenge. Each figure has an intense gaze, usually with its tongue sticking out of a rounded mouth, as if it were in some remote, drugged state. The most riveting figure is almost completely covered with fierce iron spikes, which were driven into it to unleash its powers.... ¶ "Italian Renaissance Frames." The concept of painting an illusionary scene on a two-dimensional surface has always been dependent on the frame to establish the painting's world. This exhibition, which brings the frames themselves to life, demonstrates why at one time wood carving was considered a higher art than painting. Most of the frames are empty, and after a while the eye becomes so finely tuned to this delicate, often elaborate art that the occasional El Greco within may appear out of place. Through Sept. 2. ... ¶ In a concurrent show, fifty-five American frames from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are on view. Through Sept. 2.... ¶ "Chess and Art." Perhaps Duchamp would have abandoned making art for the cerebral game of chess had he been the holder of this offbeat collection of fanciful chess sets. Included are chess pieces from various Middle Eastern cultures dating from the seventh century to the twelfth; a travelling set from nineteen-twenties Nigeria with a rollable board of hide; a particularly elaborate fourteenth-century European knight carved in walrus tusk in the form of St. George and the Dragon; and the famed "Crimean War" set from the mid-nineteenth century, with the white side representing the coalition against Russia, the major pieces being portraits of the various European and North African members of the alliance (the Russian aristocracy, ironically, are the reds). There is also a particularly surreal set from 1885, with owls, walruses, and bears, and Man Ray's enigmatic geometric sets, with their own understated surreal touch.... ¶ A well-selected display of ninety-four Chinese ceramics spanning twenty-two centuries. There are some beautiful pieces from the Tang dynasty, including a massive horse and an elongated equestrienne, and even the simpler Cizhou ware and a Northern Sung bowl are exquisite. Through Aug. 26.... ¶ "Reflections of the Floating World," an exhibition of Japanese Edo Period (1603-1868) woodblock prints that deal with the reflective quality of mirrors and water. Included are works by Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige. Through Oct. 28.... ¶ More than sixty sets of clothing worn by children from the eighteenth century to the twentieth are on view in the Costume Institute. Through Sept. 9. ... ¶ The museum's roof garden is open (when the weather is fine), with a new lineup of twentieth-century sculptures and a sixty-five-foot shade-providing pergola. Through Oct. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The "Artist's Choice" installation assembled by Ellsworth Kelly and titled "Fragmentation and the Single Form" has a kaleidoscopic, slow-motion feel. In a compact selection of great modernist works from the museum's collection, we follow the square as it tips to form a lozenge or breaks out into a hexagon, and as it shifts from painting to sculpture to photography, as well as from abstract to human significance. The selection includes Matisse's haunting "Rose Marble Table," of 1917 (one of the artist's most powerful meditations on presence and absence, positive and negative space), and also works by Cézanne, Picasso, Braque, Léger, Picabia, Arp, Malevich, Mondrian, Miró, Giacometti, Brancusi, Edward Weston ("Mexico, D.F. [Anita]," a famous 1925 dorsal nude), and of course Kelly himself. The surprise inclusions—Audubon's 1832 "Roseate Tern"; William Bell's "Perched Rock, Rocker Creek, Arizona," a photograph from 1872; and Kelly's own photographs of Gaudí's cracked-tile surfaces in Barcelona's Güell Palace—give an aerodynamic lift and curve to what might otherwise have been simply a brilliant set piece. Through Sept. 4.... ¶ Phototext pieces by Lorna Simpson that deal with issues of race, gender, and identity. Through Aug. 26.... ¶ "Matisse in Morocco." The belief is becoming more widespread that Matisse's greatness has been eclipsed by Picasso's because so many of the Frenchman's best works have been hidden away in Soviet museums. The case is persuasively argued by this glorious display of paintings—close to half of them from the Pushkin and the Hermitage—and drawings that Matisse made during two trips to Morocco in 1912 and 1913. The so-called Moroccan Triptych is as sumptuous as painting gets, and all of the works are so rich that it's fortunate the show is lean and concise. Through Sept. 4.... ¶ A retrospective featuring fifty-nine paintings by Francis Bacon. Through Aug. 28.... ¶ "First Light," a series of twenty new black-and-white etchings by James Turrell.... ¶ Fifty photographs by Lady Hawarden (1823-65), from the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London. Through Oct. 9.... ¶ "Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde." Through Sept. 4.... **note:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

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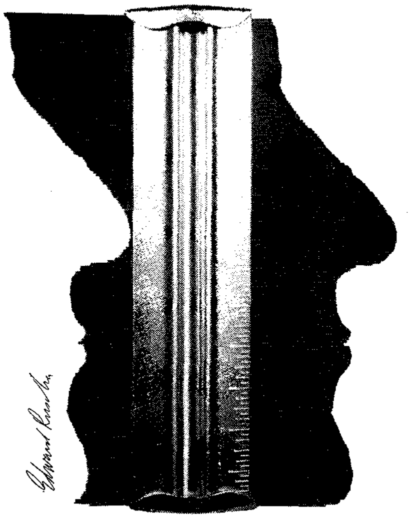

Self-portrait by Ed Ruscha

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Ten graphite drawings from 1965 by Ed Ruscha, related to his photography book from that year, "Some Los Angeles Apartments." Through Oct. 14.... ¶ If an artist's value were measured by his influence, Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) would certainly be among the most important of this century: he trained more young American hopefuls than anyone else. But one need only look at MOMA's current "Matisse in Morocco" show to realize that Hofmann was a fine but ultimately minor artist. He certainly knew how to paint, and there are many charmers in this meticulously arranged retrospective, along with a few great paintings—"Memoria in Aeternum" and "Song of the Nightingale" float to the top. But there's also a lot of well-balanced glop. Hofmann represents the beginning of the end for abstract painting, offering vision without ever being a visionary. In the long run he may be best remembered not as the mentor of Burgoyne Diller, Louise Nevelson, Alfred Jensen, and Helen Frankenthaler but as the dean of abstract painting, a teacher who transformed scores of unfocussed artists into competent ones by training them to make "good" compositions that "worked." Through Sept. 16.... ¶ "Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924)." A retrospective of more than a hundred oil paintings and watercolors by this popular artist and coörganizer of the legendary Armory Show demonstrates his ability to capture some very pretty moments of leisure with decorative mosaics of dabbed paint, but it also shows how he was trivialized by his own redundancy and overdependence upon tame Americana. Through Sept. 2. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A pleasant, didactically pointless show, in the "Curator's Choice" series, of fourteen watercolors by Winslow Homer and nineteen by John Singer Sargent. The importance of this medium to these turn-of-the-century American stars is well known. Also well known are their temperamental and stylistic differences. Homer was the rugged, plainspoken, Romantic naturalist, and Sargent the deft, cosmopolitan aesthete. Several individual works on view, however, are revealing in small ways. Homer's eighteen-eighties Bahamian pictures strongly suggest themes in early nineteen-eighties work by Eric Fischl, and Sargent's charming 1908 travel sketch "In Switzerland" paints a very pretty picture of how one tall American coped with a small Alpine bed. Through Sept. 2.... ¶ A presentation of site-specific installations by ten artists who live and/or work in Brooklyn, including Susanne Muel, David Nyzio, John Toth, and Amy Hauft. Through Oct. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Shortly after King Leopold II of Belgium was forced to end his rampage through the inappropriately named Congo Free State—today's Zaire—this museum mounted an expedition through that vast area which employed thirty-eight thousand porters and lasted from 1909 to 1915. The travellers brought back fifty-four tons of collectibles, most notably the rare animals that continue to grace the dioramas in the Akeley Hall of African Mammals. This show is primarily made up of objects relating to the expedition and accumulated from the Mangbetu people of what is now northeastern Zaire: musical instruments with highly inventive figurative carvings; photographs of people with outrageous hats and hairdos; books such as "The Curse of Central Africa," from 1903, by Captain Guy Burrows; sculptures with Brancusiesque faces that should inspire further rethinking of the history of abstraction; and numerous pieces that display colonial references, including gourds carved with images of armed soldiers. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Twenty-four custom-built doghouses by contemporary architects and designers are on view in the museum's garden. There are doghouses made of bones, rawhide dog chews, and, in one case, an old television console with "Lassie Come Home" stencilled on its empty screen. Through Oct. 14. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A selection of nearly a hundred and fifty Chinese porcelain winepots, jars, dishes, and vases made between 1620 and 1683. Through Aug. 19. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—Eighty-two examples of incunabula—books printed before 1501, no more than fifty years after the invention of printing—from the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, in Amsterdam. Through Aug. 24. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The Gibson Girl did everything:

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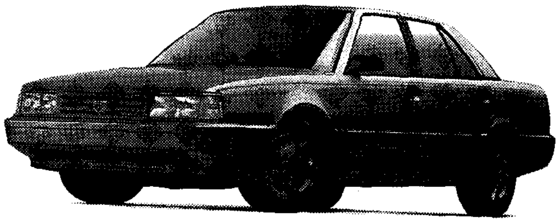

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she boated, she bicycled, she played tennis, she drove, she partied, and she married. Of course, all of these pursuits demanded different costumes, and Charles Dana Gibson's turn-of-the-century drawings created the kind of versatile mystique that would make Calvin Klein fall off his horse. The Gibson Girl's heyday, from 1895 to 1905, is celebrated in this show of fourteen full costumes, along with drawings, photographs, and memorabilia. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. —"The Age of Atlantic Discoveries," an exhibit devoted to Portugal's pioneering maritime exploration, notably of Brazil, and its impact on European culture. Maps, treaties, and navigational instruments from the mid-fifteenth century to the late sixteenth are on display, along with manuscripts, letters, and paintings. Through Sept. 1. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

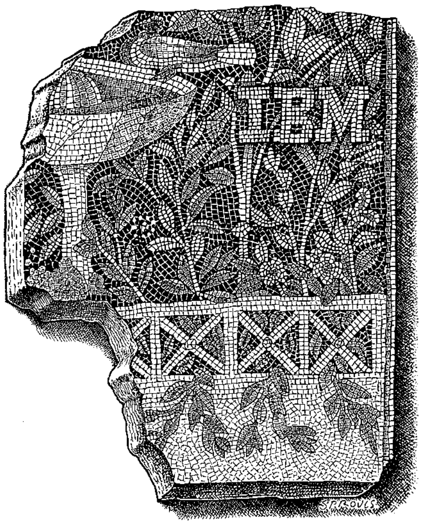
Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"The Expressionist Surface." It is doubtful that this show of contemporary art in plaster will result in increased sales of the material. But no matter how silly the exhibition is, it is probably worth a visit, if only to see several superb early George Segal sculptures, from 1958, a clear reminder of his roots in Abstract Expressionism. There are also a few works from the late fifties and early sixties by the Bay Area sculptor Manuel Neri, a fine, underrated artist whose best side is perhaps not so visible here. But most of the work by the fourteen other artists is clearly in the shadow of Segal, lacking the poignant restraint and poetic dignity of the master himself. Their pieces are little more than cheap expressions of creepy emotional realism—the sculptural equivalent of the most obvious sort of expressionistic painting. Through Aug. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

The Decade Show—A collaborative event, organized by three institutions, that is richer for the issues it raises than for the art it contains. It is divided according to themes, two per venue. By far the most cohesive installation is at the Studio Museum, where Group Material and Barbara Kruger seem to be the only ones to have addressed the complex issues of the show, and where each work—by whites, African-Americans (Hammons, Colescott, Edwards), and Hispanics (Azaceta)—is installed to look as good as it is. Through Aug. 18. The exhibition runs concurrently at **the New Museum,** 583 Broadway (open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8); the **Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art,** 584 Broadway (open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, 11 to 5; Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 8); and the **Studio Museum in Harlem,** 144 W. 125th St. (open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6). A free shuttle bus runs between SoHo and Harlem on each Saturday during the show.

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

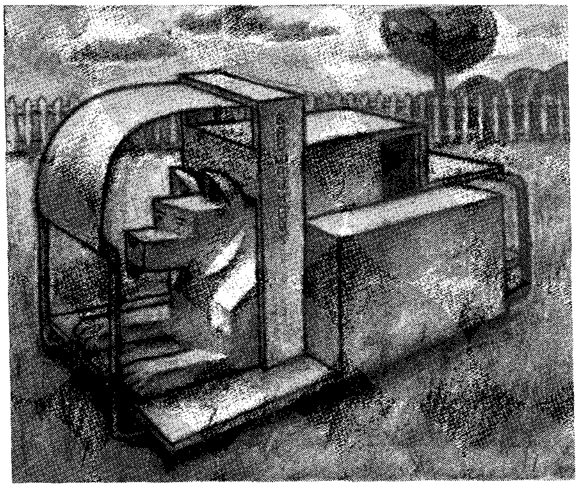
(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Rediscovering Pompeii"—The mood of this show of recent excavations is fascinating and bizarre. Viewers in the darkened rooms of the main exhibition space are greeted by a recessed, circular pit containing a "Woman from Oplontis," whose painfully contorted remains are cast in resin. Among the many gorgeous and refined objects here is an especially dazzling "Bronze Hand from the Cult of Sabazius." It not only rivals Donatello but also serves as one of the very few overt examples of the Pompeians' focus on sex—their unabashed and very famous erotica was a cornerstone of daily life. This fact is discreetly mentioned in the exhibition, yet only Sabazius' busy hand and one Augustine phallus, it seems, were considered fit for our eyes in this age. Through Sept. 15. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)



"Rediscovering Pompeii"

"Detritus"—A show of work in mixed mediums by twelve artists that addresses what is perhaps *the* subject of the year. Unfortunately, the treatment is a bit, well, spotty. There are some glaring omissions, such as Cady Noland's lyrical trash assemblages, and a couple of tired inclusions, such as one of Bruce Nauman's over-familiar waxen "Skinned Cats." But looking at a summer show with an ambitious theme often means having to take what can be got, and we do get Tony Cragg, a brilliant old hand at garbage if there ever was one, along with promising young rag-pickers like Jessica Stockholder—represented here by two-by-fours sporting wigs and newsprint—and Curtis Mitchell, whose piece consists of a distressed-velvet drape with a stain. Also on display are Alan Belcher's very direct "Spit on Mink," Georg Herold's ethereally icky "Caviar Painting," Matthew McCaslin's site-specific plumbing-pipe construction, Kevin Carter's faux mummy, and one of Petah Coyne's darkly brooding, mutant hornets' nests. Through Aug. 31. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)



Doghouses at the Cooper-Hewitt

Group Shows—At **Galerie St. Etienne,** 24 W. 57th St.: Recent gallery acquisitions by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, George Grosz, Max Klinger, Käthe Kollwitz, various Wiener Werkstätte artists, and the redoubtable Sue Coe. Seeing Coe in proximity to Kollwitz is especially interesting. They are nearly exact opposites, though both aim for essentially the same expressionistic, empathic, and incriminating effects. Where Kollwitz distills all sorrows into "universal," quasi-ecclesiastical images—bereft mothers, work-worn hands—Coe hits our collective jugular through the journalistic precision of her slaughterhouse scenes and the fierce theatrics of her allegories, which are always of highly specific evils. Through Aug. 31. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **Marian Goodman,** 24 W. 57th St.: A handsome show of gallery artists and a few others. Many of the pieces have a surrealistic edge: Claes Oldenburg's sculpture of a heel yanked from a shoe; Rebecca Horn's contraption that dusts a pair of nipple-soled sneakers with pink face powder; Richard Artschwager's Formica-and-metal quasi-musical instrument; newcomer Juan Muñoz's bronze lady in a bowl with podlike arms and brass-bell hands; and even Giuseppe Penone's bronze leaves pressed between wood branches. But other qualities are evident as well. Lothar Baumgarten's installation is a touching but somewhat tricky portrait of the railroads that helped shape this country and annihilate the native population in the process, and Thomas Struth's magnetic photograph of a conservator at work in a Naples cathedral manages to be both documentary and operatic. Through Aug. 31. . . . **Kent,** 41 E. 57th St.: A very tasteful but uneven selection of works spanning three decades. The show includes three two-tone panels by the hermetic and underviewed British painter Peter Joseph. Troy Brauntuch's quintessential white-pencil drawing from 1981 of hard-to-read fascistic statuary suggests that a reëvaluation of this artist, once hot but now not, should be undertaken. Then there are a series of off works by some of New York's more singular talents: a feeble attempt by the poetic Justen Ladda to be an easel painter, and a perplexing Artschwager piece called "Gorilla," which looks like little more than a rack of gorilla-shaped toast. Through Aug. 10. . . . **Pace,** 32 E. 57th St.: This gallery has perfected the art of display. In this show, a first-rate assortment of minimal and minimalist paintings, all from the "right" dates—a red Reinhardt, a blue-and-green Kelly, a masking-tape Ryman, a 1974 Mangold, and an exquisitely grayed Marden, among others—surrounds the exhibition's only gestural work, a luscious orange de Kooning from 1978, which, rather than confounding the finely honed selection, gives it body. Through Aug. 24.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Yishai Jusidman—Well-executed, Old Masterish landscapes painted on spheres mounted on metal poles. Although the works are very romantic and somewhat sophisticated, they are also gimmicky—mere landscapes on sticks. Through Aug. 17. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

Christopher Wool—Large paintings on paper, of either a Penckian phoenix or what might be described as a black putto done in the racist style of nineteen-thirties Hollywood movies. The two images are arranged in various combinations—singly, in pairs, as friezes. The paintings are smart-ass, cynical works about the state of originality and the role of the artist in today's art world, but they are also surprisingly penetrating and pack a hard punch. Through Sept. 12. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"Inside the Beast"—This selection of gritty works from the eighties could also be called "Colab, Lower East Side, Summer of '79." Included are several John Ahearns painted plaster busts that are among the artist's most animated; one badly damaged piece is accompanied by a photo of it in the Garcia-family home before it was destroyed by fire. And several works by David Wojnarowicz display different sides of this passionate political commentator. Through Aug. 23. (Lucien, 555 Broadway.)

"The Thing Itself"—This exhibition of "art in which the integrity of found objects remains intact during both the making and the viewing of the work" has a nice rhythm to it. Among the more compelling inclusions are a Mike Kelley stuffed-animal sculpture titled "Double Flaccid Cat" and a Ken Lum piece with two ordinary love seats stacked and facing a corner. The most intriguing work is a Robert Gober from the late seventies, in which a model of a Greek Revival mansion is cut in half and slammed against the wall, each half in a separate room. Adrian Piper's soul-catching work, begun in 1985, consists of an autobiographical text and jars filled with the artist's hair, nail clippings, and skin shavings, to be added to until her death. Through Aug. 10. (Feature, 484 Broome St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Group Shows—At **LORENCE-MONK,** 578 Broadway: This show features lots of pristine minimalist painting, all of it beautiful. Some of the work, like Alan Uglow's, is overly precious; some, like Günter Umberg's, with its velvety sumptuousness, is less so. There's also some messiness here, in the form of Ursula von Rydingsvärd's hacked-wood sculpture and Kim Jones' mud-splattered cube of newspapers. But, over all, a bit more soul, a dash of oomph, would help measurably. Through Aug. 24. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **WEBER,** 142 Greene St.: Especially notable in this handsome exhibition are a sheltering fabric-and-wood wall construction by Franz Erhard Walther that follows in the medical/shamanistic line of Joseph Beuys, two 1966 stripe paintings by the elegant subversive Daniel Buren, two expressionistic wood sculptures by Mel Kendrick, and two walls full of the shiny, black-centered painted plaster surrogates of Allan McCollum, which walk the line between ennui and magic with intelligence and concision. Through Aug. 31.

OTHER VENUES

The Anchorage—The artists exhibiting this summer in New York's most dramatic space for contemporary art, the vaulted brick anchorage beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, take very seriously the various indications that our golden society is falling apart. As usual, the quality is uneven, and some things look much better than they actually are. There is an overabundance of sound installations with echoing voices and low-level, mood-evoking blue lights. (One includes the spoken text "We are the names of time. To talk is human.") But there are also some very affecting works. Jim Goldberg has constructed a full-size house of the picket-fence variety; on its exterior he has projected slides of homeless youths and their drawings, which describe in documentary detail the squalor, danger, and isolation in which they live. Nancy Rubins has erected a personal public monument, a memorial to a collaborator who died recently of AIDS. It is a massive piece that is composed of a huge dead oak tree and sixty thousand pounds of rubble from a sculpture they constructed together, most of it contained now in sealed metal cases. In a simple, stark sound work, Jerri Allyn makes such commonsense statements as "Jasper Johns sells in the millions, paintings with defaced flag use" and "Wouldn't you love to hear Rohrabacher tell us why Courbet's rollicking, and decidedly lesbian-looking, women are glorious?," and repeatedly wonders what it would take to "get the sixty per cent we rarely hear from to write to their Senate and their Congress" in support of freedom of speech and the N.E.A. Through Oct. 7. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Socrates Sculpture Park—New York is so short on good public sculpture that one prefers to suspend judgment when passing by the hokey sign at the gate of this riverfront acreage, which reads "ENTERING SCULPTURE CITY (ELEV. 7 FT., POP. FRIENDLY)." Such restraint, however, proves futile, because this is a primarily dreary assortment of very big sculptures—in metal, stone, and other big-sculpture materials. The ad-hoc park setting is delightful, and the occasional patches of tall grasses, the rotting barge half-submerged in the East River, and the glorious view of the Upper East Side have far more character than most of the amateurish art within, which even includes some huge painted rocks that line the waterfront in a particularly repulsive range of colors. There are a few high points, though, the most polished being a large orange sculpture by Mark di Suvero, part of which rotates with the wind. Beyond it, behind a gate that is sometimes unlocked, is the outdoor studio of the same artist, with several massive steel sculptural components that together look like a heroic city deserted in the process of construction. Yet the "city" feels whole in its various stages of completion, down to the large pile of rusting steel beams with grass growing among them. (Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City. Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

TWO shows at the Pace-MacGill gallery (32 East 57th Street) are testaments to the texture and subtlety one can achieve with black-and-white photography. Although the exhibitions are very different, both are of interest for their psychological dimensions. The first room of the gallery is taken up by Patrick Faigenbaum's photographs of Italian aristocrats in their homes. The stiffness of these pictures makes them particularly intriguing. Although the interiors are full of incredible art, furniture, and decorative splendors, the rigid positioning and posing of the subjects, as well as the use of black-and-white, makes everything seem rather plain. These photographs are Old World in every sense.

The other photographs on view here are by Suzanne LaFont, whose work is being shown in New York for the first time. Her multipanelled pieces combine closeup profiles of various faces, and they're cinematic and photographic all at once. Like Faigenbaum's pictures, LaFont's are effective because they invite the viewer to project what's going on inside the subjects' heads. In a certain way, they're like New Wave mug shots.

Helen Chadwick—An installation made up of photographic objects and large Polaroids—most of them of raw-meat products arranged on backgrounds of various fabrics. The pictures were produced over a period of two days, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, with museum visitors watching. There are some additional touches, such as rococo mirrors, rococo candlesticks, and jars of pimientos, that make the gallery feel like a home environment. Through Aug. 11. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon Tuesdays through Saturdays.)

Félix Teynard (1817-92)—The Met has mounted a passionate show of thirty-five primarily architectural views of Egypt taken in 1851-1852 by this French civil engineer. At the time, each photograph was still an almost miraculous event, and in these pictures you can feel how everything counted, how nothing about the process was taken for granted. The salted paper Teynard used has a marvellous delicacy compared with today's slicker, thicker papers, and it contributes to the over-all sense of awe and achievement. An ironic feature of this show is the inclusion of Teynard's photo of the Temple of Dendur—the very same monument that is now on view in the Museum's Sackler wing. Through Sept. 9. (Metropolitan Museum.)

Edward Weston (1886-1953) / **Arnold Eagle**—This exhibition of a hundred and eighteen portraits and nudes from 1914 to 1943 includes photos of James Cagney, E.E. Cummings, José Clemente Orozco, Jean Charlot, Isamu Noguchi, and Igor Stravinsky. / Sixty black-and-white prints from the thirties and forties of New York's tenements and elevated subways, and the people within them. Through Sept. 9. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Photographers' Muses"—A show of seven very different photographers that provides generous examples of each artist's portrayal of his or her subject. It is a heavenly experience to see such a selection of Edward Weston's pictures of Charis Wilson, or Harry Callahan's loving shots of his wife, Eleanor, and daughter, Barbara, or—the surprise of the show—Fernand Fonssagrives on Lisa Fonssagrives. And to view the individual styles of three extraordinary photographers of glamour—Cecil Beaton, George Hurrell, and today's wild and wonderful Steven Meisel—is fascinating. For instance, the eighties and nineties punch and sense of sculptural form in Meisel's photos of Linda Evangelista contrast profoundly with Beaton's rather plain-Jane approach to Garbo. The seventh photographer is Sheila Metzner; with her inspiration, Rick Di Nome, she breaks the pattern of female muses that dominates in the history books and in this show. Through Aug. 24. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

Short List—**MARILYN BRIDGES,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8, through Sept. 2); **PATRICK FAIGENBAUM** and **SUZANNE LAFONT,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (closes at 4 on Fridays, through Sept. 7); **LINNAEUS TRIPE** and **SUZANNE OPTON,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (closed Mondays, open Saturdays, through Aug. 31).

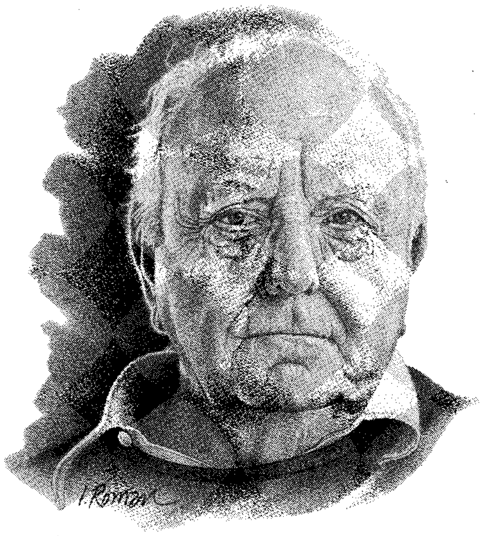
MUSIC

WE don't think of Stravinsky as a songwriter; he was the composer who heard Bruno Walter calling out to an orchestra "Sing, sing!" and wished he had said "Dance, dance!" But, after all, he grew up with singing: his father was an important basso at the Mariinsky opera, in St. Petersburg, a predecessor of Chaliapin. And his catalogue is full of vocal compositions, songs not excluded. It's just that there is always something a little different, something offbeat, about them that keeps them from seeming like part of the "normal" twentieth-century song literature (Britten, Poulenc, Barber, Ives, and so on). He would write things like "Cat Lullabies," for voice and three clarinets; piano accompaniment and lyric poetry are the exception rather than the rule. Much in Stravinsky's song list is piquant and pointed; some songs are haunting. The better part of the list is to be sung and played August 10 and 11 in MOMA's Summergarden series.

Not included at MOMA are two arrangements of Hugo Wolf songs that Stravinsky made late in life for voice and nine instruments. These were dedicated to a startlingly versatile young mezzo-soprano who had sung Gesualdo madrigals for Stravinsky's comrade Robert Craft, made a Covent Garden début in "Wozzeck," and gone on to sing Jocasta in Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" (dressed as an egg!) at La Scala. This was Marilyn Horne, who doesn't sing as much contemporary music these days (though she is set to give the première of a William Bolcom song cycle next year). At the moment she is getting ready for Mahler, increasingly her concert specialty in recent seasons, and for Rossini, her long-standing operatic specialty, with the festival orchestras of Waterloo (August 11) and Mostly Mozart (August 14 and 15). We know that some people find Ms. Horne's style somewhat brash, and that sometimes she sings a little on the sad side of the note these days, but we like her style, and find her command, brio, and confidence always bracing.

IN TOWN

Mostly Mozart Festival—Aug. 6 at 8: The American String Quartet, with guests Pinchas Zukerman, viola, and André-Michel Schub, piano, performs chamber music by Mozart. . . . ¶ Aug. 7-8 at 8: Leopold Hager conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival orchestra in an all-Mozart evening, with Horacio Gutiérrez, piano, and Thomas Zehetmair, violin. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 8: Mr. Zukerman and Marc Neikrug play Mozart violin-piano sonatas. . . . ¶ Aug. 10-11 at 8: Leopold Hager conducts the festival orchestra in an evening of Mozart, with Garrick Ohlsson, piano, and Gil Shaham, violin. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 7:30 and Aug. 13 at 8: The Moscow Virtuosi, with violinist-conductor Vladimir Spivakov and pianist Vladimir Viardo, in a program of Vivaldi, Haydn, and Mozart. . . . ¶ Aug. 14-15 at 8: Gerard Schwarz leads the orchestra in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and is joined by mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne in arias from Rossini's "Tancredi." (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Through Aug. 25.)



A Goldman Memorial Band salute to Virgil Thomson

New York City Opera—LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, with Sheryl Woods, Paul Hartfield, James Dietsch, and Mark S. Doss; conducted by Louis Salemno. (Aug. 8 and Aug. 11 at 8.) . . . CARMEN, with Sharon Graham, Renée Fleming, John Absalom, and Gordon Hawkins; Hal France. (Aug. 9 at 8.) . . . A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, with Sally Ann Howes, Regina Resnik, Beverly Lambert, George Lee Andrews, Kevin Anderson, and Michael Maguire; Paul Gemignani. (Aug. 10 at 8 and Aug. 12 at 2.) . . . LE NOZZE DI FIGARO, with Maureen O'Flynn, Renée Fleming, Cynthia Rose, Dean Peterson, and William Stone; Scott Bergeson. (Aug. 11 at 2 and Aug. 15 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Metropolitan Soloists—Woodwind ensemble music by Beethoven, Gordon Jacob, and Karl Stamitz (his "Darmstädter" Clarinet Concerto, arranged by soloist Christine Soder). (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. Aug. 7 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Angelina Réaux—Soprano, performs "Sweet Song," a staged cycle of songs composed by Ricky Ian Gordon to poems of Dorothy Parker, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Langston Hughes, and others. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 255-7190. Aug. 8-11 at 8 and Aug. 12 at 5.)

Bargemusic—Solo and chamber music by Chopin, Kodály, and Schumann. With Nai-Yuan Hu, violin; Bion Tsang, cello; and Stephanie Brown, piano. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 9-10 at 7:30 and Aug. 12 at 4.)

"Tamerlano"—Handel's opera reaches its final installment in Robert Press's one-act-per-week, English-language version, performed by the Measured Breaths Theatre Company. Patricia Fortner conducts a modernist rescoring. (Cooper Square Theatre, 50 E. 7th St. 228-0811. Act III: Aug. 9-12 at 8.)

Goldman Memorial Band—A "Virgil Thomson Memorial Concert," including his "Metropolitan Museum Fanfare," "Fanfare for France," and the symphonic suite "At the Beach," as well as music by Copland, William Schuman, John Cage, and Ned Rorem. Gene Young, the newly appointed music director of the seventy-three-year-old band, conducts. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Aug. 11 at 8:15. No tickets necessary.)

Concordia: A Chamber Symphony—The fifty-member orchestra plays works by Gershwin, Copland, and Haydn (his "La Passione" Symphony), under its music director, Marin Alsop. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Aug. 12 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

New York Philharmonic—Valery Gergiev conducts Berlioz, Debussy, and Tchaikovsky under the stars. (Great Lawn, Central Park. Aug. 13 at 8. No tickets necessary. For raindate information, call 580-8700, ext. 227.)

Ensemble Courant—In its New York début, this original-instrument string quartet (comprising violinists Richard Luby and Ruth Johnsen, violist Ann Woodward, and cellist Brent Wissick) performs music by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Aug. 15 at 5:45.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—Aug. 6 at 8:30: Gilbert Kalish, piano, and Sanford Sylvan, baritone, join the Boston Symphony Chamber Players in music by Fred Lerdahl, John Harbison, Roger Kellaway, and Copland. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 8:30: Peter Serkin, piano, plays Beethoven's Bagatelles, Op. 126, as well as compositions commissioned by the pianist from eight contemporary composers. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 9: Marek Janowski conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven and Wagner, as well as in Saint-Saëns' Third Violin Concerto, with Malcolm Lowe. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:30: The Boston Symphony, with André Previn conducting, plays music by Dvořák and Steven Stucky, and is joined by cellist Yo-Yo Ma in Bloch's "Schelomo." . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 2:30: André Previn and the Boston Symphony in an all-Mozart afternoon, with the conductor doubling as pianist for the C-Minor Piano Concerto. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 8:30: Leon Fleisher performs music by Scriabin, Bach/Brahms, and Strauss/Godowsky for piano left-hand, and (with Mr. Ma and violinists Jaime Laredo and Joseph Silverstein) Korngold's rarely performed "Suite," Op. 23. (Lenox, Mass. Through Aug. 26. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Caramoor Music Festival—Aug. 10 at 9: Sir Roland Hanna's Jazz Quartet. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:30: The New York Chamber Soloists, in a festival of J. S. Bach concertos for one, two, three, and four harpsichords, with four harpsichordists taking turns at the keyboards. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 5:30: Frank Foster leads the Count Basie orchestra. (Katonah, N.Y. Through Aug. 19. Buses for Caramoor will be at the Katonah station to meet trains leaving Grand Central on Saturdays at 2:50 and 5:30, and Sundays at 2:50. For information about tickets and trains, call 1-914 232-1252.)

Waterloo Festival Orchestra—The final performance of the season—Gerard Schwarz conducts Wagner's "A Faust Overture," orchestral excerpts from Richard Strauss's "Intermezzo," and Howard Hanson's Third Symphony, and is joined by mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne in Mahler's "Five Rückert Lieder." (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. For directions and ticket information, call 1-201 507-8900. Aug. 11 at 8:30.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Hank Williams, Jr.—Born Randall Hank Williams, Jr., in 1949, the son of the most influential C. & W. musician may not be "moanin' the blues" like his father, but he's become quite a country rocker in his own right. At sixteen, he had a No. 1 country hit and toured with a band called the Cheatin' Hearts. In the mid-seventies, he stopped living off his father's legacy and began recording with "outlaws" like Waylon Jennings. Doubtless he'll be singin' and pickin' a few of his dad's classic tunes, but now, with such songs as "All My Rowdy Friends (Have Settled Down)," he has some of his own, too. With Earl Thomas Conley and the Kentucky Headhunters. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Aug. 9 at 8.)

Aretha Franklin—The Queen of Soul (and cancellations) is booked for two nights here, and the faithful pray that she'll appear, singing her very best R. & B., gospel, and pop songs. It's no secret that she can wail the bejesus out of any lyric from gasoline commercials to "Amazing Grace," but many have forgotten how moving her performances can be. Her recent material relies heavily on duets, and these songs are a mixed bag, but when the lights dim and it's just Aretha at the piano, the soul flies. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 9-10 at 8.)

"Classical Jazz"—Final performances of the series. Aug. 6: Johnny Griffin, Von Freeman, and others . . . ¶ Aug. 7: Benny Carter, Milt Jackson, Bobby Hutcherson, and the Classical Jazz Orchestra. . . . ¶ Aug. 8-9: An all-Ellington evening, with the Classical Jazz Orchestra. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Evenings at 8.)

Phil Collins—Meadowlands Arena. Aug. 10-11 at 8.

Chic Street Man—Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Aug. 13 at 8.

Joan Armatrading—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Aug. 14-15 at 8.

Little Feat—With Blues Traveler. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. Aug. 15-16 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Philadelphia Phillies, Aug. 7 at 7:35, Aug. 8 at 1:35, and Aug. 9 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Cubs, Aug. 10 at 7:35, Aug. 11 at 7:05, and Aug. 12 at 3:05. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, Aug. 14-16 at 7:35.

Yankees—Away until Aug. 17, when they meet the Seattle Mariners at home.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Saratoga Springs: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Ballerina is on Aug. 10, and the Alabama is on Aug. 11. Through Aug. 27. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. Through Sept. 1. . . . At the Atlantic City Race Course: Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. Through Sept. 1. . . . TROTTING at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Through Aug. 18. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Mondays through Saturdays at 7:45.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Bobby Blue Bland—A "Musicruise" concert on a Circle Line boat. (Pier 81, Twelfth Ave. at 41st St. Aug. 10; boarding starts at 7 and 9:30. For information about tickets, call 956-5550.)

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—Aug. 7 at 5:30: Andrea Del Conte and the American Spanish Dance Theatre. . . . At 8:15: Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at noon: The Adam Makowicz duo. . . . At 6:30: The New York Indonesian Consulate Gamelan. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 5:30: Kristin Eliasberg Dance. . . . At 8:15: Garth Fagan Dance. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 5:30: Young choreographers Amy Sue Rosen, Sarah Skaggs, and Donna Uchizono. . . . At 8:15: Garth Fagan Dance. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 1 and 3:30: Magic and juggling, with Jim Moore, Doug Skinner, Vince Bruce, Mark Nizer, and Jack Adams. . . . At 2 and 4: Alien Comic. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 from noon to 4: A day

Aretha Franklin

of clowning, with jugglers, the High Street Circus, Jan Greenfield, Larry Goldstein, and the Acrobats. . . . At 8:15: Jim Jackson. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 7.30: The Light Opera Company of Manhattan, Dave Frishberg, Illegitimate Music, Daryle Rice, and Tom Paxton. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at noon: The Don Pullen trio. . . . At 5:30: The Peggy Spina Tap Company, with the Joel Forrester trio and Fred Strickler. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 5:30: The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. . . . At 6:30: Hemispheres. . . . At 8:15: Ko-Thi, African drummers and dancers. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.)

JONES BEACH THEATRE—Aug. 7-8: Erasure. . . . ¶ Aug. 10-11: **JAMES TAYLOR.** Sweet Baby James will play the hits, misses, and cover tunes of his twenty-plus-year career. Taylor was one of the most important singer-songwriters of the seventies, but his influence has waned over the last decade, and his later albums have received little airplay. But, as recent sold-out concerts attest, his supporters have not left him behind, and for them he will deliver his mellow, elegiac songs with plenty of warmth. . . . ¶ Aug. 15: Jimmy Buffett and the Coral Reefer Band. (1-516 221-1000. Evenings at 8.)

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT—Aug. 8 at 6:30: The Kit McClure Band. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8: Dave Brubeck. . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 6:30: Buster Poindexter. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 669-9424.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE—Aug. 10 at 8:30: Marta Renzi and the Project Dance Company, and Déjà Vu Dance. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 3: Ruth Brown, with Drink Small. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 3: Eddie Palmieri and Ronald Shannon Jackson. (Rumsey Playground, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 360-2777.)

WORTH WATCHING

At the intersection of Fifth Avenue, Broadway, and 25th Street, across from the Flatiron Building, sits an unwanted child: the Worth monument. Erected in 1857, it is the only sculpture in Manhattan that remains unclaimed in the Adopt-a-Monument program sponsored by public and private agencies. The sculpture is one of the closest things New York has to a sacred tomb. Beneath it are buried not only Major-General William Jenkins Worth's uniform-covered coffin but a trunk containing artifacts from his era. These items include newspapers from November 25, 1857, the day his remains were moved here from their original site; "Norton's Literary Letters: American Papers of Interest"; a piece of Old Fort Putnam; coins; and a Colt revolver.

The monument itself is designed like an Egyptian obelisk. A fifty-one-foot-high granite shaft is engraved with inscriptions that enumerate highlights of the Major-General's military career, including many victories in the Mexican War. Nearly a decade after his death in 1849, this native of Hudson, New York, was reinterred in the type of ceremony (guns firing, soldiers saluting) that seems to promise immortality. Few New Yorkers, however, know that the Major-General is buried here, and even fewer are familiar with the time capsule and the uniform that drapes the coffin. Perhaps one day, Major-General Worth will rise from his slumber, strap on the Colt revolver, and ride his bronze horse up Fifth Avenue, in a final campaign to secure the corporate funding that his monument needs.

ASCOT CHANG

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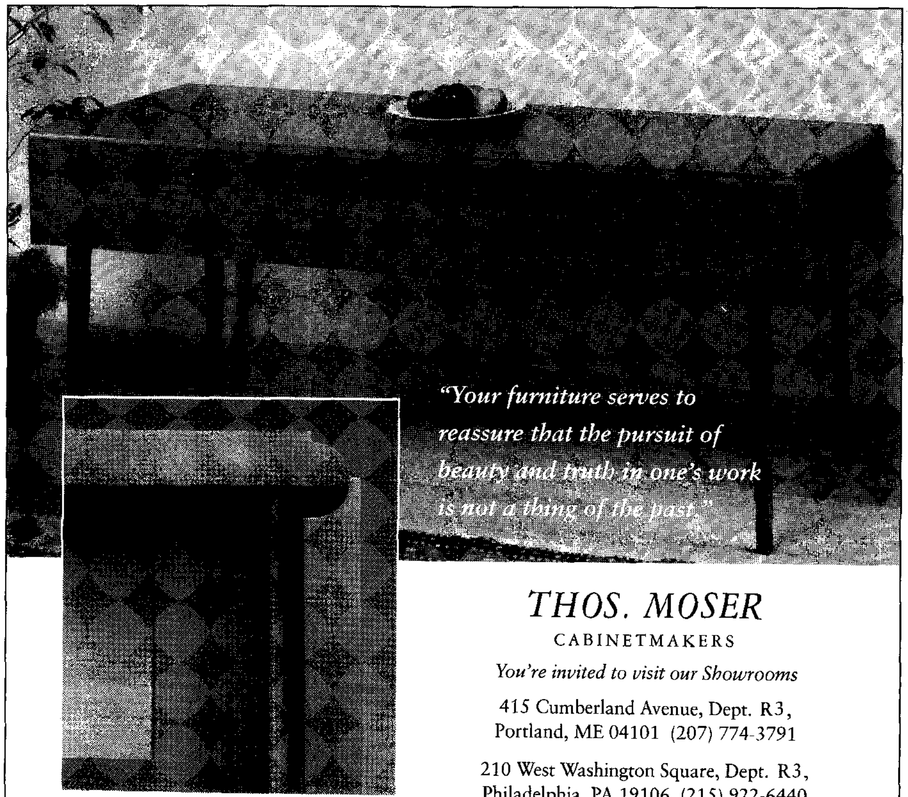
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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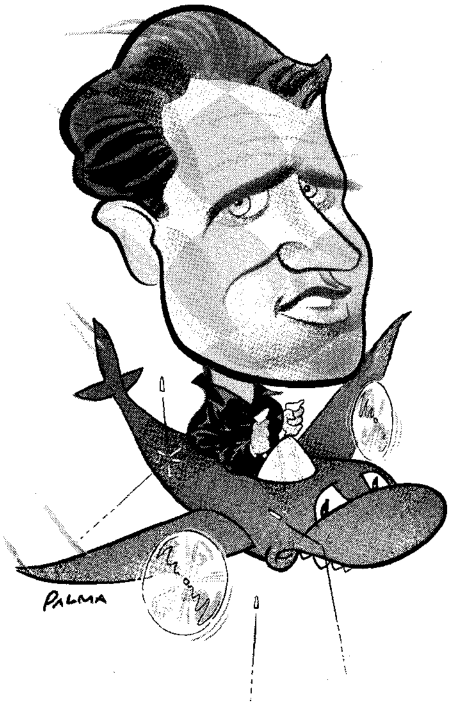
FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.



Mel Gibson in "Air America"

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Jesus of Montreal" (directed by Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 9: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard. From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.
Theatre 5: "How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired" (Jacques W. Benoit; in French), with Isaach De Bankolé.
Theatre 6: "Quick Change" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Aug. 7-8: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor; "Tire au Flanc" (1927, Renoir; silent), with Michel Simon; and "The Golden Coach" (1953, Renoir), with Anna Magnani.
Aug. 9-10: "The Rules of the Game"; "The Crime of Monsieur Lange" (1935, Jean Renoir; in French), with René Lefèvre; and "The Lower Depths" (1936, Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin and Louis Jouvet.
Aug. 11-12: "The Rules of the Game"; "Toni" (1935, Jean Renoir; in French), with Charles Blavette; and "The River" (†).
Aug. 14-15: "The Rules of the Game"; "Boudu Saved from Drowning" (1931, Jean Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon and Charles Grandval; and "On Purge Bébé" (1931, Renoir; in French, no English subtitles).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Freshman" (†).

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (503-7320)
"Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 9: "Total Recall" (†). From Aug. 10: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 4: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Aug. 9: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn. From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.
Theatre 6: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
(Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 9: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn. From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Young Guns II" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Christian Slater.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Chicago Joe and the Showgirl" (Bernard Ross), with Kiefer Sutherland and Emily Lloyd.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Aug. 9: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†).
From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dick Tracy" (†).
Theatre 3: "Quick Change" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 9: "Total Recall" (†). From Aug. 10: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 2: "The Freshman" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 9: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen. From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Ghost" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Aug. 9: "Days of Thunder" (†).
From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 9: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson. From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Quick Change" (†).
Theatre 2: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 7: "In a Year of 13 Moons" (1978, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German), with Volker Spengler. . . . ¶ Aug. 8-9: "The Marriage of Maria Braun" (1979, Fassbinder; in German), with Hanna Schygulla. . . . ¶ From Aug. 10: "Ariel" (Aki Kaurismäki; in Finnish).
Theatre 2: "Men in Love" (Marc Huestis).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 9: "Young Guns II" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Christian Slater. From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ghost" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Life Is a Long Quiet River" (Etienne Chatiliez; in French).
Theatre 2: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "Dick Tracy" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.
Theatre 2: "Young Guns II" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Christian Slater.
Theatre 3: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin),

with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Theatre 5: Through Aug. 9: "Die Hard 2." From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Theatre 6: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Theatre 7: "Quick Change" (†).

Theatre 8: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.

Theatre 9: "Young Guns II."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Dick Tracy" (†).

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Pretty Woman" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.

Theatre 2: "Twisted Obsession" (Fernando Trueba), with Jeff Goldblum and Miranda Richardson.

Theatre 3: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.

Theatre 5: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Theatre 6: "Pretty Woman" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

Through Aug. 9: "Days of Thunder" (†).

From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Freshman" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Life Is a Long Quiet River" (Etienne Chatiliez; in French).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

"Longtime Companion" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

Through Aug. 9: "Men in Love" (Marc Huestis).

From Aug. 10: "Daddy Is Dyin' . . . Who Got the Will?" (Jack Fisk), with Beau Bridges, Keith Carradine, Beverly d'Angelo, Tess Harper, and Judge Reinhold.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

"Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Ghost" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Young Guns II" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Christian Slater.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 3: "May Fools" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Theatre 2: "The Freshman" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Aug. 9: "Dick Tracy" (†). From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.

Theatre 4: "Quick Change" (†).

Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Aug. 9: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn. From Aug. 10: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Pretty Woman" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Theatre 2: Through Aug. 9: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "Total Recall" (†). From Aug. 10: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: Through Aug. 9: "Total Recall" (†). From Aug. 10: "Air America" (directed by Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.

Theatre 2: "Young Guns II" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Christian Slater.

Theatre 3: "The Freshman" (†).

Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (directed by Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

Theatre 6: "Young Guns II."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Dick Tracy" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

Theatre 3: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through Aug. 9: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.

From Aug. 10: "The Two Jakes" (Jack Nicholson), with Nicholson, Harvey Keitel, Meg Tilly, and Madeleine Stowe.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (969-0950)

Theatre 1: "Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.

Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Quick Change" (†).

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Santa Sangre" (Alejandro Jodorowsky).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Aug. 6: "To Please a Lady" (1950, directed by Clarence Brown), with Clark Gable, Barbara Stanwyck, and Adolphe Menjou; and "Jeopardy" (1953, John Sturges), with Stanwyck, Ralph Meeker, and Barry Sullivan.

Aug. 7-8: "The Cincinnati Kid" (1965, Norman Jewison), with Steve McQueen, Edward G. Robinson, Ann-Margret, Karl Malden, and Tuesday Weld; and "Larceny, Inc." (1942, Lloyd Bacon), with Jane Wyman, Edward G. Robinson, Broderick Crawford, Jack Carson, and Anthony Quinn.

Aug. 9: "Forty Guns" (1958, Sam Fuller), with Barbara Stanwyck and Barry Sullivan; and "The Furies" (1950, Anthony Mann), with Stanwyck, Wendell Corey, Walter Huston, and Judith Anderson.

Aug. 10-11: "Brother Orchid" (1940, Lloyd Bacon), with Ann Sothern, Edward G. Robinson, Donald Crisp, and Humphrey Bogart; and "Lady of Burlesque" (†).

Aug. 12-14: "Brigadoon" (†) and "Kismet" (†).

From Aug. 15: "My Fair Lady" (1964, George Cukor), with Audrey Hepburn, Rex Harrison, Stanley Holloway, Wilfrid Hyde-White, and Gladys Cooper.

Cinema Village, 22 W. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Aug. 7: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari; and "The White Line" (1948, Luigi Zampa; in Italian, with an English narration), with Gina Lollobrigida.

Aug. 8-9: "Stella" (1990, John Erman), with Bette Midler, John Goodman, Trini Alvarado, Stephen Collins, and Marsha Mason; and "Men Don't Leave" (1990, Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.

Aug. 10-11: "Yojimbo" (†); and "Kagemusha" ("The Shadow Warrior"; 1980, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Tatsuya Nakadai.

Aug. 12: "Fellini Satyricon" (1970, Federico Fellini; in Italian); and "Fellini's Roma" (1972, Fellini; in English and Italian).

Aug. 13-14: "State of Siege" (1973, Costa-Gavras; in French), with Yves Montand; and "Music Box" (1989, Costa-Gavras), with Jessica Lange, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Frederic Forrest, and Lukas Haas.

From Aug. 15: "Straight Through the Heart" (1983, Doris Dörrie; in German); and "Rosalie Goes Shopping" (1990, Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, Brad Davis, and Judge Reinhold.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Aug. 7: "The Awful Truth" (1937, Leo McCarey), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy; and "This Thing Called Love" (1940, Alexander Hall), with Rosalind Russell.

Aug. 8-9: "M" (1932, Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre; and "The Three-penny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya.

Aug. 10-11: "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975, Peter Weir), with Rachel Roberts and Dominic Guard; and "Witness" (1985, Weir), with Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis, Lukas Haas, Josef Sommer, and Jan Rubeš.

Aug. 12: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Open City" (1945, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.

Aug. 13-14: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth, Welles, and Everett Sloane; and "In a Lonely Place" (1950, Nicholas Ray), with Humphrey Bogart and Gloria Grahame.

From Aug. 15: "Rich and Strange" (1932, Alfred Hitchcock), with Henry Kendall and Joan Barry; and "The Ring" (1927, Hitchcock).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Aug. 6: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabel Corey and Roger Duchesne; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.

Aug. 7: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.

Aug. 8: "The Little Foxes" (1941, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, and Teresa Wright; and "Dodsworth" (1936, Wyler), with Walter Huston, Ruth Chatterton, and Mary Astor.

Aug. 9: "How to Marry a Millionaire" (1953, Jean Negulesco), with Marilyn Monroe, Bette Grable, and Lauren Bacall; and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953, Howard Hawks), with Jane Russell and Monroe.

Aug. 10-11: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, Ernst Lubitsch), with Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins, and Edward Everett Horton; and "Design for Living" (1933, Ernst Lubitsch), with Fredric March, Hopkins, and Gary Cooper.

Aug. 12: "The Tenant" (1976, Roman Polanski), with Polanski, Isabelle Adjani, Melvyn Douglas, Joe Van Fleet, and Shelley Winters; and "Knife in the Water" (1962, Polanski; in Polish).

Aug. 13: "Ecstasy" (†) and "Algiers" (†).

Aug. 14: "The Big Heat" (1953, Fritz Lang), with Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame, Alexander Scourby, and Lee Marvin; and "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine.

Aug. 15: "The Cat and the Canary" (1939, Elliott Nugent), with Paulette Goddard, Bob Hope, John Beal, and Douglass Montgomery; and "The Old Dark House" (1932, James Whale), with Charles Laughton, Melvyn Douglas, Raymond Massey, Boris Karloff, and Gloria Stuart.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

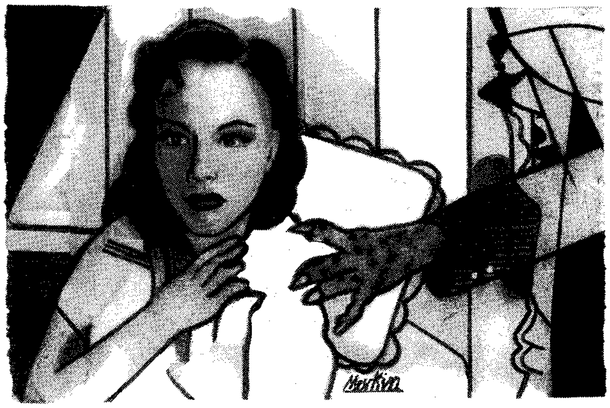
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Aug. 6 at noon: “No Way Out” (1950, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Richard Widmark, Linda Darnell, and Sidney Poitier. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 3: “Night and the City” (1950, Jules Dassin), with Richard Widmark, Gene Tierney, and Googie Withers. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 6: “Broken Arrow” (1950, Delmer Daves), with James Stewart, Jeff Chandler, and Debra Paget. . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at noon: “A Letter to Three Wives” (1949, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Jeanne Crain, Linda Darnell, Ann Sothern, Kirk Douglas, and Paul Douglas. . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 3: “Forever Amber” (1947, Otto Preminger), with Linda Darnell, Cornel Wilde, George Sanders, and Jessica Tandy. . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 6: “Unfaithfully Yours” (1948, Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, and Rudy Vallée. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at noon: “The Snake Pit” (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Olivia De Havilland, Leo Genn, and Mark Stevens. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 3: “House of Strangers” (1949, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Edward G. Robinson, Susan Hayward, and Richard Conte. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 6: “Forever Amber.” . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at noon: “Where the Sidewalk Ends” (1950, Otto Preminger), with Dana Andrews, Gene Tierney, and Gary Merrill. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 3: “Road House” (1948, Jean Negulesco), with Ida Lupino, Cornel Wilde, Richard Widmark, and Celeste Holm. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 6: “Night and the City.” . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at noon: “All About Eve” (1950, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, George Sanders, and Gary Merrill. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 2:30: “A Letter to Three Wives.” . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 5: “No Way Out.” . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at noon: “The Model and the Marriage Broker” (1951, George Cukor), with Jeanne Crain, Thelma Ritter, and Michael O'Shea. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 3: “Where the Sidewalk Ends.” . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 6: “The Snake Pit.” . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at noon: “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes” (1953, Howard Hawks), with Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 3: “All About Eve.” . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6: “The Model and the Marriage Broker.’

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 15 at 12:30 and 6: “Last Tango in Paris” (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French), with Marlon Brando, Maria Schneider, Jean-Pierre Léaud, and Catherine Allégret. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 3:15 and 8:45: “Loulou” (1980, Maurice Pialat; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Isabelle Huppert, Guy Marchand, and Humbert Balsan.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—Aug. 11 at 4 and 6:30: “Wend Kuuni” (1982, Gaston Kabore; a film from Burkina Faso, in More).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Aug. 7 at 6:30: “Glory” (1989, Edward Zwick), with Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 1: “The Harder They Come” (1973, Perry Henzell), with Jimmy Cliff. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 2:45 and 6: “Land of Look Behind” (1982, Alan Greenberg), a documentary; and “Heartland Reggae” (1983, John W. Mitchell), with Bob Marley and others. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 1 and 3:35: “Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary,” a documentary; and “The Final Comedown” (1972, Oscar Williams), with Billy Dee Williams, D'Urville Martin, and Raymond St. Jacques. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 7: “Harlem Remembers” (1990), with Sarah Vaughan, Dexter Gordon, and others. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 1 and 4:05: “The Spook Who Sat by the Door” (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook, Paula Kelly, and Janet League; and “The Final Comedown.” . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 6:30: “Glory”; and “A Dry White Season” (1989, Euzhan Palcy), with Zakes Mokae, Donald Sutherland, Jurgen Prochnow, and Marlon Brando. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 1 and 4: “Princess Tam Tam” (1935, Edmond T. Gréville; in French) and “Zou Zou” (1934, Marc Allégret; in French), both with Josephine Baker. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 6:30: “Do the Right Thing” (1989, Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello, Lee, Ossie Davis, Giancarlo Esposito, Ruby Dee, and Joie Lee; “Making ‘Do the Right Thing’ ” (1989, St. Claire Bourne), a documentary; and “Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads” (1983, Lee). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 2: “Sophisticated Ladies” (1982, Sid Smith); and “Eubie” (1981). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 7:15: “Glory” and “A Dry White Season.” . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6: “Native Son” (1951, Pierre Chenal), with Richard Wright; and “A Raisin in the Sun” (1961, Daniel Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudie McNeil, Ruby Dee, Diana Sands, and Ivan Dixon. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 1: “The Joe Louis Story” (1953, Robert Gordon), “The Nat (King) Cole Story” (1989), “The Jackie Robinson Story” (1950, Alfred Green), and “The Marvin Gaye Story” (1987). . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 6:30: “She's Gotta Have It” (1986, Spike Lee), with Tracy Camila Johns, Tommie Hicks, John Canada Terrell, Raye Dowell, and Lee; and “School Daze” (1987, Lee).

Film Society of Lincoln Center—A program of Italian film from neorealism to the present. All films in Italian, with English subtitles. Aug. 10 at 6:15: “Red Desert” (1965, Michelangelo Antonioni), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 8:45: “Open City” (1945, Roberto Rossellini), with Anna Magnani. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 2: “The Bandit” (1946, Alberto Lattuada). . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 4: “The White Sheik” (1951, Federico Fellini), with Brunella Bovo, Leopoldo Trieste, and Alberto Sordi. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 6: “Ossessione” (1942, Luchino Visconti). . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 9: “Miracle in Milan” (1951, Vittorio De Sica), with Bovo and Francesco Golissano. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 2: “Bitter Rice” (1949, Giuseppe De Santis), with Silvana Magnano and Raf Vallone. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 4:30: “Paisan” (1949, Rossellini), with Maria Michi, Gar Moore, and Dots M. Johnson. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 7: “The Bicycle Thief” (1949, De Sica). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 9: “Bellissima” (1951, Visconti), with Magnani, Tina Apicella, and Alessandro Blasetti. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6:15: “Umberto D.” (1951, De Sica), with Carlo Battisti. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 8:30: “A Voyage to Italy” (1952, Rossellini), with Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 6:15: “I Vitelloni” (1953, Fellini), with Franco Fabrizi and Sordi. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 8:30: “The Easy Life” (1963, Dino Risi), with Vittorio Gassman and Jean-Louis Trintignant. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 6:15: “Accattone!” (1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini), with Franco Citti. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 8:45: “Divorce—Italian Style” (1961, Pietro Germi), with Marcello Mastroianni, Daniela Rocca, Stefania Sandrelli, and Trieste. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)



At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Paulette Goddard in “The Cat and the Canary”

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Brigadoon (1954)—M-G-M was having an economy drive, and this adaptation of Lerner and Loewe's Broadway hit musical fantasy, which was scheduled to be shot on location in Scotland, was instead done in the studio. Also by executive decree, the director, Vincente Minnelli, had to do it in CinemaScope—which, for dance in studio settings, was disastrous. Gene Kelly and Van Johnson play the two Americans hunting in the Scottish Highlands who stumble into Brigadoon, a magical village that went to sleep in 1754 and wakes for a day each century. Kelly falls in love with a local girl (Cyd Charisse), while Johnson maintains a cynical attitude. Probably the material was too precious and fake-lyrical to have worked in natural surroundings, either, but the way it has been done it's hopelessly stagy. The movie has one sensational sequence, when the action gets away from that damned idyllic village and Kelly and Johnson go to a jangly, noisy Manhattan night club with Elaine Stewart; you can feel Minnelli's relief at being able to do something funny and bitchy after staging all those wholesome scenes with grinning men in tartans. Arthur Freed produced; Lerner wrote the script; Kelly choreographed. With Hugh Laing, Barry Jones, and Eddie Quillan.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 12-14.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/7/90.) (Angelika Film Center.)

Days of Thunder—This new Tom Cruise vehicle, directed by Tony Scott, is the latest example of the nearly demagogic brand of pop-culture uplift practiced by the producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer. (They were also responsible for "Flashdance" and "Top Gun.") It's about winning, and nothing else. The setting this time is the stock-car racing circuit. The screenwriter, Robert Towne, seems to be trying to underplay the rah-rah elements of the material—to give competition some point other than pure ego gratification. And he supplies some nice dialogue: easy, natural-sounding macho banter among the drivers and their crews. But the movie has been stripped for speed: by the big race (the Daytona 500), all the ambiguities in the script have been removed, and there's nothing to interfere with Cruise's, and the producers', streak to the finish line. Like the previous Simpson-Bruckheimer picture, it's designed—engineered, really—to give audiences an overdose of the thrill of victory; it

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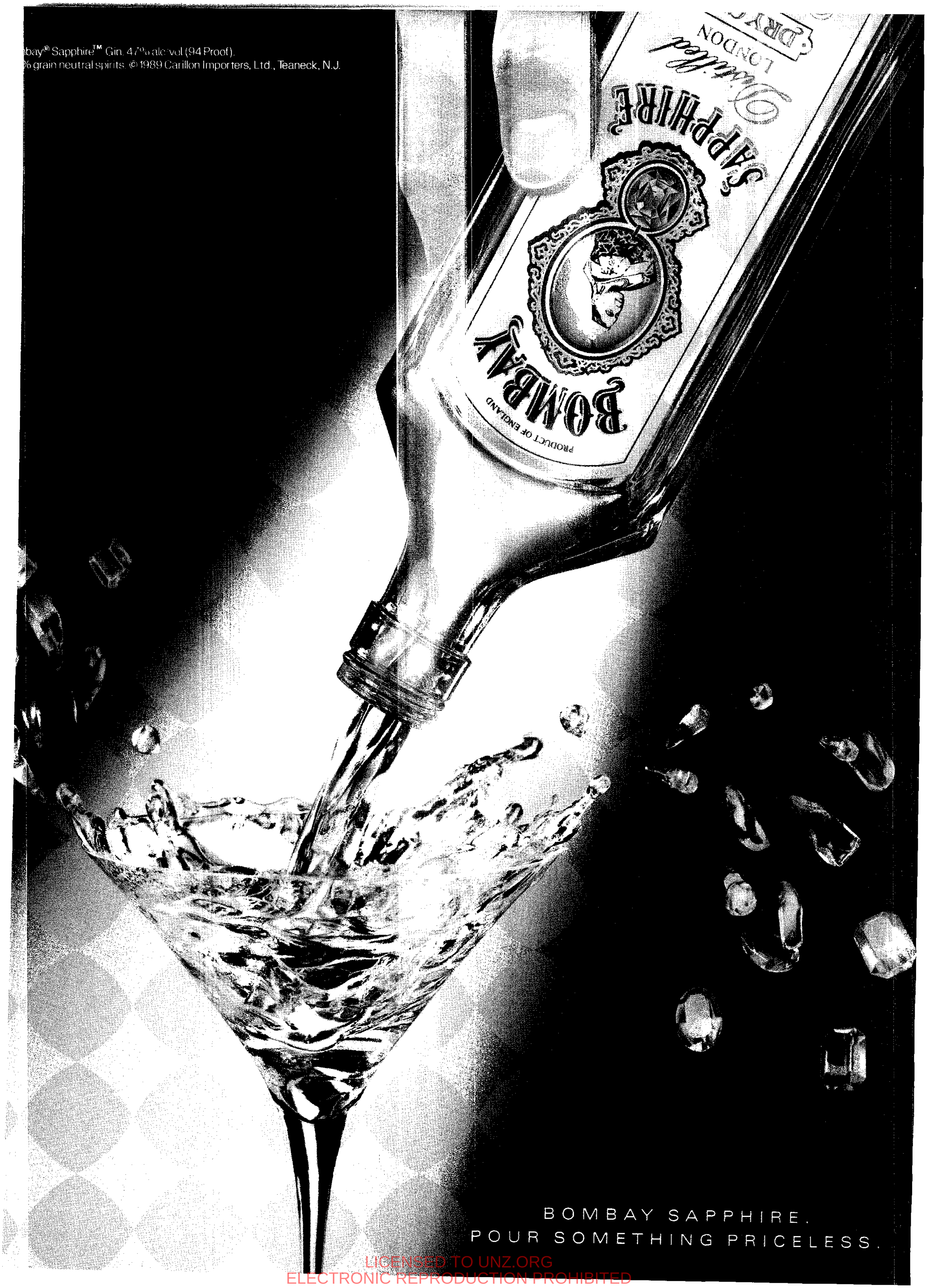
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wants us to jump out of our seats, pumping our fists in the air and roaring for the hero to pulverize his opponents. The racing sequences are very ordinary. Also with Robert Duvall, who gives a lively performance as the hero's mentor, and Michael Rooker, Nicole Kidman, Randy Quaid, and Cary Elwes.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Manhattan Twin. . . . ¶ U. A. East, and Ziegfeld; through Aug. 9.)

Dick Tracy—This isn't the kind of crass crowd-pleaser we've become accustomed to; its dullness is of the old-fashioned variety. Everything but the film's bold, striking comic-strip visual design (created by Richard Sylbert and photographed by Vittorio Storaro) is low-key. Warren Beatty directed and plays the title role. His performance is recessive almost to the point of perversity. In Chester Gould's comic strip, Dick Tracy always seemed like a tough, aggressive, no-nonsense guy; Beatty's Tracy is a ditherer. And his tentativeness as an actor here is matched by the dreamy, distracted quality of his direction. The picture has no drive; its style is less "Dick Tracy" than "Classics Illustrated." It's pleasant, lovingly detailed, and eye-filling. It's everything a movie can be except interesting. Some of the actors are fun to watch: Madonna, as Breathless Mahoney, vamps entertainingly; Glenne Headly does an expert spunky-gal turn as Tess Trueheart, the hero's long-suffering girlfriend; and Al Pacino, as a sleazy mobster named big boy Caprice, creates a memorable comic grotesque. Also with William Forsythe (Flattop), Dustin Hoffman (Mumbles), Mandy Patinkin (88 Keys), R. G. Armstrong (Pruneface), Paul Sorvino (Lips Manlis), Charlie Korsmo, Charles Durning, Estelle Parsons, Dick Van Dyke, and James Caan.—T.R. (7/2/90) (Cinema II, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Aug. 9.)

With a voice like a silken rumble and eyes that glittered like black gold, Charles Boyer was a natural for purveying "Continental charm." He was also a superlative performer—even in his "great lover" roles he called up Continental depths. He received his second Academy Award nomination for playing Pépé le Moko in the smash 1938 romantic melodrama "Algiers" (playing Aug. 13 at Theatre 80 St. Marks). Directed by John Cromwell (John Howard Lawson wrote the script; James M. Cain provided dialogue), "Algiers" is a Hollywood remake of Julien Duvivier's 1937 "Pépé le Moko" (which starred Jean Gabin). The producers held the French film back from United States release for two years, and copied the original down to the camera angles. Their deluxe American version has a translated quality, as if it were filmed in a gilt-lined echo chamber.

Still, thanks to Boyer and the gorgeous Hedy Lamarr, who plays Pépé's dream girl, Gaby, "Algiers" has its own sleek allure. Pépé, a French jewel thief, is omnipotent only in the Casbah (the old quarter of Algiers). To his lovestruck, homesick eyes, the visiting Parisian Gaby recalls everything beautiful and vital about his beloved City of Lights—including the Métro. Boyer plays Pêpé with emotion-slicked intensity: he's just as much a dream figure for Gaby as she is for him. Whether he's sweating out a squealer or tripping the hot fantastic with Gaby, he's sure of every move. Boyer starts at such a peak of underworld urbanity that it's shattering to see Pépé lose his gloss once Gaby gets under his skin. His feelings jump out of his eyes, his flesh, even the hair on his head. "Algiers" may be a synthetic doomed romance, but Boyer gives it body and soul.

Ecstasy (1933)—The once scandalous Czech film, directed by Gustav Machaty, and starring the very young Hedy Lamarr. It was originally intended to be called "Symphony of Love"; along with some explicit sexual sequences, there is symbolic erotic imagery that is romantic, poetic, and, despite its innocent absurdity, sensuous and exciting. The picture was banned and then released and then withdrawn and finally reissued, in so many different versions that everyone who talks about it appears to have seen (or imagined) different sex acts. (In the fifties, there were versions in which someone had decided to prolong the ecstasy by printing the climactic scenes over and over.) Still, whichever "Ecstasy" one sees, it's delicately, tenderly erotic. The theme is Lawrentian, as Henry Miller pointed out in the definitive essay on the film, "Reflections on Extasy." In German.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 13.)

The Freshman—This comedy, written and directed by Andrew Bergman, wears its zaniness on its sleeve. The hero, Clark (Matthew Broderick), is a quiet young man from Vermont who has just entered the N.Y.U. film school. Within a few days of arriving in New York, he's making deliveries for an "importer" named Carmine Sabatini (Marlon Brando) and being treated like a member of Sabatini's family (or Family): Carmine's daughter (Penelope Ann Miller) has told her father that she wants to marry Clark, and the old man embraces him, with alarming enthusiasm, as "the son I never had." The movie is overinsistent and very erotic. When Bergman's jokes are good, they're sensational; when they're not so good, he repeats them again and again, as if they'd become funnier through familiarity. In this picture he has actors who play his sort of material to perfection. Miller and Bruno Kirby, as Carmine's fast-talking weaselly nephew, are hilariously unfazed by the family's criminal activities, and Broderick calibrates his reactions with remarkable comic dexterity. And Brando seems to be in a bizarre and wonderful world of his own. People in the movie keep staring at him and commenting on his resemblance to Don Corleone, and he plays along, parodying himself marvellously. It's a sensational turn. In his scenes the movie seems less frantic; its lunacy takes on an air of serenity—a deeper, more inexplicable, and much funnier weirdness. Also with Paul Benedict, Maximilian Schell, B. D. Wong, and Bert Parks (belting out "Tequila" and Dylan's sardonic "Maggie's Farm" at a formal dinner).—T.R. (7/30/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews Festival, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over, with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the gooier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews Paramount.)

Gremlins 2 The New Batch—The director, Joe Dante, and his team (which includes the screenwriter Charlie Haas and the effects supervisor Rick Baker) have made a multimillion-dollar special-effects-crammed picture that has the loose, improvisatory feel of the great Warner Brothers cartoons of the forties and fifties. They're fearless and indefatigable gagsters, and the movie is smarter, wilder, and more unfettered than the original "Gremlins" (1984). There's an ideal setting for the gremlins' rampaging consumption: they've been let loose in a state-of-the-art Manhattan office building and mall called the Clamp Centre (after Daniel Clamp, the egotistical developer who built it). This towering steel-and-glass wedge is a monument to the runaway acquisitiveness of the eighties, and by the time the little monsters have chomped and guzzled (and sung and danced) their way through its cheerless offices and boutiques, Dante and his collaborators have trashed—or at least lobbed spitballs at—quite a few of the most unattractive aspects of life in these United States. In its adolescent way, the movie's almost subversive: a high-spirited combination of Looney Tunes principles and Dante's own manic pop-culture-in-a-blender sensibility. Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, Dick Miller, and Jackie Joseph return from the first film. They're joined by John Glover, who plays Clamp as a doltish child; Haviland Morris, who is hilarious as an ambitious, fast-talking businesswoman named Marla; and the horror-movie veteran Christopher Lee, who plays Dr. Catheter, the director of a genetic-engineering laboratory.—T.R. (7/2/90) (59th Street East Cinema; through Aug. 9, evenings only.)

Kismet (1955)—This time, it was Vincente Minnelli who tried his hand with the familiar material, in a Hollywood-doctored version of the Broadway show that featured music derived from Borodin (including "A Stranger in Paradise" and the ubiquitous "Baubles, Bangles, and Beads"). Despite Howard Keel's relaxed, strong voice and Dolores Gray's low-down wiles, it didn't work the way it had on the stage—it had lost its sensual power. This is a fruity, kitschy production—a studio film in the worst sense of the term—and defeat seems to hover over the players' heads. Jack Cole staged the dances; the cast includes Ann Blyth, Vic Damone, Monty Woolley, and Sebastian Cabot.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 12-14.)

Lady of Burlesque (1943)—Gypsy Rose Lee's murder-mystery novel, "The G-String Murders," cleaned up, and burlesque as an institution considerably tamed. The movie has scenes in which burlesque audiences are stimulated into raucous excitement by the sight of girls clothed practically to the stifling point. Barbara Stanwyck's bumps and grinds are communicated via her face and a few percussion sounds, but she acts with a hard realism that suggests something of the milieu, and Michael O'Shea, who plays opposite her, has a relaxed show-biz authenticity. With J. Edward Bromberg, Iris Adrian, Marion Martin, Gloria Dickson, Pinky Lee, Frank Conroy, and Frank Fenton. Considering how few of Gypsy Rose Lee's racy bits are actually left, the director, William Wellman, does a good job of simulating raciness.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 10-11.)

Longtime Companion—The screenwriter, Craig Lucas, and the director, Norman René, track the effects of AIDS on the lives of eight people: seven gay men and a straight woman who is a lifelong friend of one of the men. The filmmakers focus on one day in each year of the epidemic, from 1981 through 1989, and the mournful progress of the decade is expressed by the gaps between the annual episodes: the cast of characters keeps getting smaller, and at the end only the woman and three of the men are left. The movie is sometimes very effective, but it's often blander and more simplistic than it should be. It seems determined to convey a wholesome, "normal" image of gay life to straight America—so all its characters are pleasant and good-looking, and they're all white, too. The only really interesting characters are a middle-aged couple, David (Bruce Davison) and Sean (Mark Lamos). The natural protagonist of the drama is David, who, when Sean gets sick, cares for him with extraordinary patience and tenderness. Davison's performance (in probably the best role he has ever had) is wonderfully dry and precise. There's a strange reserve in his demeanor even when he's being goofy, so the strength he shows at the bedside of his dying lover is both heartbreaking and absolutely convincing. It's a well-written role, and Davison does a beautiful piece of acting. After he, too, disappears—between episodes—the movie seems to have lost the best part of itself. Also with Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, Patrick Cassidy, Mary-Louise Parker, John Dossett, and Dermot Mulroney.—T.R. (5/21/90) (Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

May Fools—Louis Malle's new film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from the stirring street theatre of May, '68, but they're affected by it nonetheless. The setting is a shabby estate presided over by Milou (Michel Piccoli), a genial man in his sixties who lives the life of a lazy country sensualist: he keeps bees, browns in the sun, and gropes the housekeeper. On the sunny day when the story begins, his mother dies, and he summons the rest of the family for the funeral and the reading of the will. There's a sense that things are about to change, both on the large scale of French society and on the infinitely smaller one of Milou's life. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval of May, '68, very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. Piccoli gives one of the best performances of his long career: he's vigorous and radiantly good-humored. Although its charm sometimes feels a bit too easy, the film is enjoyable throughout. It just bounces along to the rhythm of its remarkable score, composed and played by the eighty-two-year-old jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the movie, like the music, has a delicate swing to it. In French.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Mo' Better Blues—With Denzel Washington and Spike Lee; directed by Lee. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bijou Cinema, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Presumed Innocent—With Harrison Ford, Brian Dennehy, and Raul Julia; directed by Alan J. Pakula. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Cinema I, 68th St. Playhouse, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Pretty Woman—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment.—T.R. (Sutton, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. Evenings only.)

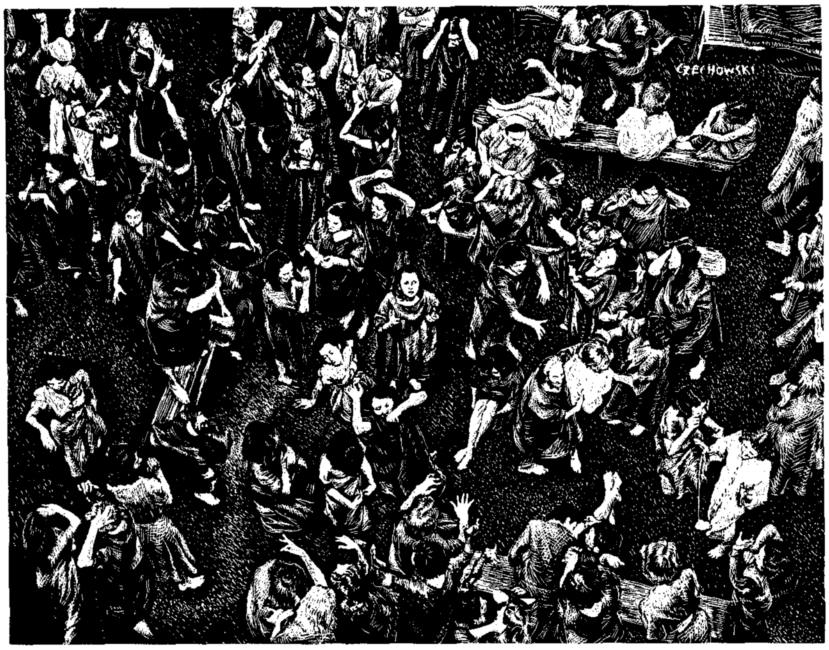
Quick Change—Bill Murray plays Grimm, a fed-up New York City bureaucrat who dresses up as a clown to rob a midtown bank. After Grimm has ditched his disguise, and he and his two accomplices (Geena Davis and Randy Quaid) head for the airport, the picture turns into a series of skits on the routine horrors of the city. Basically, it's a conventional caper comedy, but it's funny, because the gags are tossed off quickly and new characters keep coming at us. Murray co-produced (with Robert Greenhut) and co-directed (with Howard Franklin), and, although it's clearly a vehicle for him, he's actually less dominating than he was in the vehicles created for him by others. His attitude, wised-up and casual, holds the movie together, but he gives the other actors plenty of room, and many of them get brilliant bits of shtick to sink their teeth into. Bob Elliott (the surviving member of the great comedy team Bob and Ray) plays an elderly bank guard, a mild man who thinks he sounds fierce; his time onscreen can't add up to more than ten minutes, but every moment is pure joy. Tony Schalhoub (as a cabdriver who speaks a Middle Eastern language no one can identify), Philip Bosco (as a scrupulous bus driver, whom Grimm accuses of being "Ralph Kramden's evil twin"), and Jack Gilpin (as a self-satisfied yuppie hostage) all have wonderful moments, and there's a sublimely silly cameo by Stanley Tucci as a lisping, cringing gunsel. The picture has a core of sanity: it knows what it is, which is nothing much, and what it does best, which is observing strange behavior in familiar settings. Murray's direction is an extension of his performing style: he's so relaxed and sure of his effects that he doesn't even care if he's upstaged every now and then.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

The River (1951)—Jean Renoir's first color film, made in India, in English, was adapted from Rumer Godden's novel about a British family in India and shot along the banks of the Ganges by Renoir's great cinematographer nephew, Claude Renoir. It's a poetic study of the contact of two civilizations. Renoir does not usurp the position of an insider; he sees India with Western eyes—eyes so sensitive and highly trained that his vision of India is a mythic poem set in the midst of the Indian river of life. This river encompasses death (the Goddess Kali episode, the holy cobra that kills the child) in a way that American audiences tend to find disturbing. Godden's themes and story line are part of the texture, interwoven with the ritual feasts, the festivals, and the rhythms of native music, and some people, accustomed to films edited for dramatic crescendo, dislike the serene flow—so much is going on that they feel nothing happens. There are static patches of dialogue, and some of the casting is questionable, but the theme (outsiders in a culture) meshes perfectly with the director's own position as a moviemaker in India, and visually the film is serenely yet passionately beautiful. With the dancer Radha, Nora Swinburne, Esmond Knight, Adrienne Corri, Patricia Walter, Arthur Shields, and Thomas Breen. Adapted by Renoir and Godden.—P.K. (Public Theatre; Aug. 11-12.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million-dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every closeup of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Olympia; through Aug. 9, evenings only. . . . ¶ Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Criterion Center; through Aug. 9.)

Yojimbo (1961)—Akira Kurosawa's boisterous, exuberant comedy-satire about violence, with Toshiro Mifune as an unemployed samurai, a sword for hire. When our Westerner came into town, although his own past was often shady, he picked the *right* side—the farmers against the gamblers and the cattle thieves. This samurai walks into a town divided by two rival merchants quarrelling over a gambling concession, each supporting a gang of killers. He has his special skills and the remnants of a code of behavior, but to whom can he give his allegiance? He hires out to each and systematically eliminates both. We might expect violence carried to extremity to be sickening; Kurosawa, in a triumph of bravura technique, makes it explosively comic and exhilarating. There is so much displacement of the usual movie conventions that we don't have the time or inclination to ask why we are enjoying the action; we respond kinesthetically. One of the rare Japanese films that is both great and funny to American audiences. (Sergio Leone made his own version of it, "A Fistful of Dollars.") In Japanese.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Aug. 10-11.)



At MOMA, "The Snake Pit"

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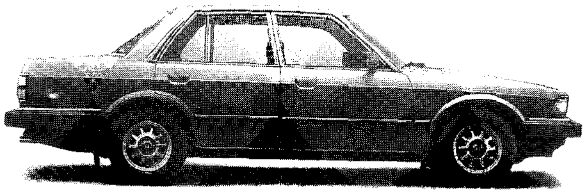
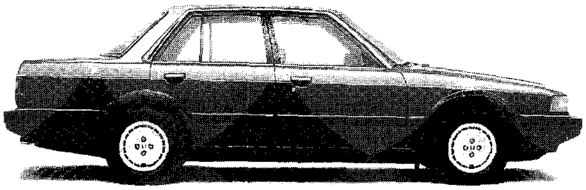
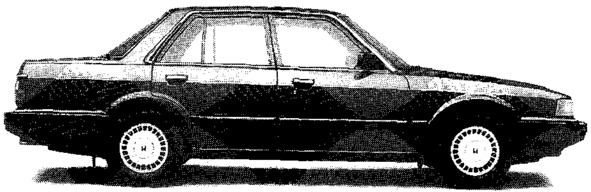


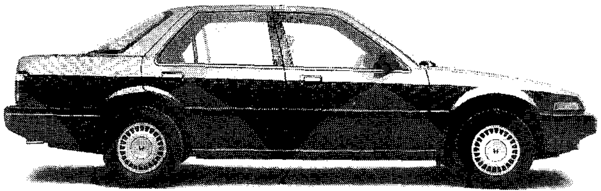
1983 Car and Driver Ten Best List



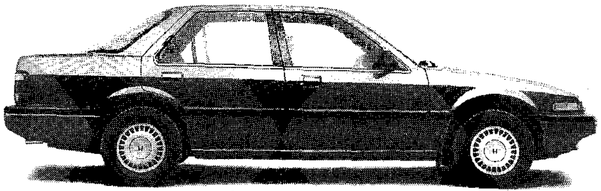
1984 Car and Driver Ten Best List



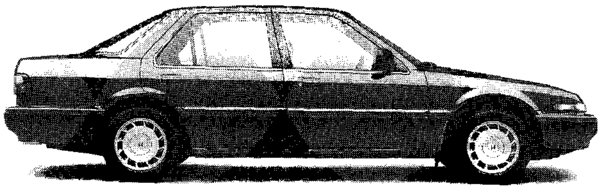
1985 Car and Driver Ten Best List



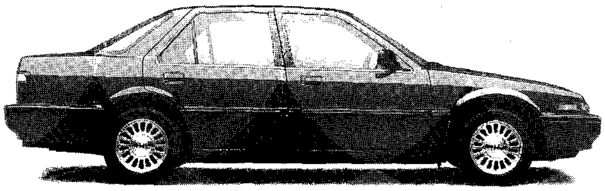
1986 Car and Driver Ten Best List



1987 Car and Driver Ten Best List

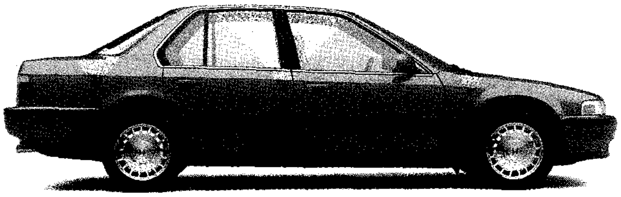


1988 Car and Driver Ten Best List



1989 Car and Driver Ten Best List

We could go on and on.



1990 Car and Driver Ten Best List

In the eight years *Car and Driver* magazine has presented its Ten Best list, only one car has been chosen every time. The Accord.

HONDA

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

IN December, 1987, during Mikhail Gorbachev's first visit to Washington, the American flag and the red flag of the Soviet Union flapped side by side across the portico of the Old Executive Office Building, just next door to the White House. The casual passerby on Pennsylvania Avenue could look up and wonder what a time traveller from the fifties would feel if he saw those two flags there. *The Russians are coming! They're here! They won!* Yet a time traveller from the winter of 1987 would be almost as startled today if he entered the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, a few blocks from the Capitol, for there, side by side, are an American Pershing II and a Soviet SS-20 missile.

Not so long ago, the Western security establishments viewed the SS-20 as the ultimate in Red terror, because it was the first Soviet missile that was mobile—we couldn't hit it before it hit us. Fred Iklé, who was the director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the Ford Administration (when the qualifications for such a post included a disenchantment with arms control), warned in 1976 that this new Soviet weapon imposed "a towering dark cloud over Europe and Asia." The next year, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt worried that to leave this threat unmatched would upset the balance of power and "decouple" American and Western European security. In response, President Carter developed the Pershing II—tipped with just one warhead, in contrast to the SS-20's three, but more accurate than the SS-20 and at least as mobile. The subsequent arms race helped to topple a few governments (including Schmidt's), and sparked into being the largest anti-nuclear movement in history.

Then Gorbachev ascended to power, and astounded everyone by accepting President Reagan's proposal—offered in the belief that no Kremlin leader could ever accept it—to destroy all the Pershing IIs if the Soviets destroyed all their SS-20s. One of the more obscure provisions of the deal allowed each side to retain a small allotment, disarmed, for display at museums. And so here the two missiles are, together for the first time, on the Washington Mall—a Soviet nuclear missile smack in the middle of the choicest target—leaving the casual spectator to wonder, much as one might wonder about souvenir chips from the Berlin Wall, just what all the fuss was about.

But the Smithsonian exhibit offers more than historical irony. This is America's first look at the SS-20. American spy satellites could not snap photographs of one, because this missile, unlike most other Soviet models, always left its place of manufacture encased in a huge metal tube, and the tube was never opened in daylight. Even the special teams of American inspectors stationed at Russian factories and missile sites to guard against cheating on the Reagan-Gorbachev treaty that banished the weapon had been allowed to examine the missiles only inside their tubes.

We have long been told that the Russians build their rockets big, but not until you behold the SS-20 can you really understand what that means. The museum display placard says that the missile stands fifty-four feet ten inches tall (another few inches and the ceiling would have been too low for the cranes required to hoist the missile into place), is almost six feet in diameter, and weighs 77,572 pounds. It makes its neighbor, the Pershing II, only thirty-four and a half feet, look almost benign, and not quite real. There is a certain "Jetsons" aesthetic at the Air and Space Museum—the way it displays Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis, Chuck Yeager's X-1, which broke the sound barrier, and an X-15 supersonic rocket plane as successive steps on the path of technological progress. There's no aesthetic point to the SS-20, however; it makes no bones about its purpose. With its great size and its rough and mottled surface, it is a machine of doom, undisguised. In its intended deadliness and its present impotence, it

Rand McNally New York
New York
New York City
Manhattan
BWAY MAP
STREETWISE DOWNTOWN
STREETWISE MANHATTAN

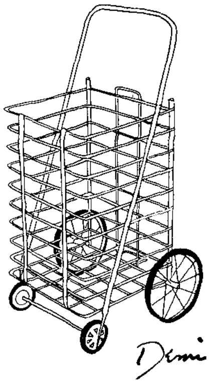
spells out more graphically than one might expect a museum exhibit to do the tragic waste of the past forty years, and the incipient promise of the future.

• •

Squire

A FRIEND writes:

I acquired, sight unseen, a piece of land just outside Lynchburg, Tennessee, about half a dozen years ago, and, finding myself recently in Nashville, a mere sixty miles to the north, I seized the day and drove down to have a look at it. Lynchburg (pop. 641), the seat of Moore County, is the site of a celebrated eating place called Miss Mary Bobo's Boarding House and, most notably, the home of the Jack Daniel Distillery, and it was from the Tennessee Squires Association, a fellowship of avid Jack Daniel's drinkers, that I received, along with the honorific of Tennessee Squire, my land. It is identified as Plot No. 51020, and it is one square foot in area.



I arrived in Lynchburg at around ten o'clock in the morning, after a night in Shelbyville ("The Walking Horse Capital of the World" and "Pencil City U.S.A.") and a fifteen-mile drive through rugged limestone hills, and found the distillery—a casual cluster of mostly red brick buildings—in a hollow leading to a cave and a cool-water spring. I was directed to an undistinguished building, then along a corridor lined with racks of fifty-gallon barrels, up a steep flight of stairs, and into a cluttered little office and the smiling presence of the promotion manager, a big, well-fleshed man named Roger Brashears. His hair was white and crewcut, he wore heavy horn-rimmed glasses, and he was beautifully shod in black water-buffalo-hide cowboy boots.

"I started out here in advertising, and then they began calling it marketing," he said. "That confused me. I thought marketing meant going down to the store for a bottle of sweet milk. So they made me what I am now. No, I can't tell you a whole lot about our Tennessee Squires. 'Cept this: the idea started back in the nineteen-fifties, and you ain't the only Squire. We don't give out no numbers, because we respect our members' privacy. And you got to be nominated by another Squire—in good standing—to be considered. Well, I guess you know this is the oldest registered distillery in the U.S.A. It was registered right after the war, in 1866. Jack Daniel—his full name was Jasper Newton Daniel—discovered this spring and bought the land when he was sixteen years old, and in about 1887 he started making what he called Old Time Old No. 7. Why he called it No. 7 is anybody's guess. Jack was a little fellow, just five foot two. He used to say, 'My head is mighty close to the ground.' He died in 1911, the year after Moore County went dry. It's still dry. Folks here have always voted dry, but there's a good bunch of them enjoy a little drink of Jack every now and then. My old daddy has his Jack every night at bedtime. My mama is so strict that when people ask her where her son works, she just says 'In Lynchburg.' Jack never married, and he left the distillery to his nephew, Lem Motlow. Old Lem was snakebit with trouble. First, Moore County went dry, then Prohibition come along, then, after Repeal, there was the Depression, then come World War II. But when he died, in 1947, he was rich. His four boys took over from him. Now we belong to a conglomerate. I reckon you'll be wanting to see your land, but it's my custom first to offer a little drink. Dry just means you can't *sell* whiskey." Brashears produced a bottle and glasses. He poured a good inch into my glass. There was no mention of either water or ice. "What I've give you there is something new. We call it Gentleman Jack. It ain't even on sale yet 'cept in a few big cities. It's the best whiskey we've ever made. Which means it's the best in the world."

I took a swallow of Gentleman Jack. It was the first time I'd had a drink as early as ten-thirty in the morning, but I have to say it tasted just fine.

Brashears led me down to a parking lot and a gray Ford pickup. "We call this a Lynchburg Cadillac," he said. "It's got to have four-wheel drive and either AM/FM stereo or else a gun rack. I've got a gun, but I don't carry it much. I don't want it stole. That's my house there, just across the creek. I could walk to work in two minutes, but that ain't our way. Folks down here don't walk. Now, these buildings are for different stages of whiskey-making. There's the stills. There's the building where we run our whiskey through a charcoal filter. Gentleman Jack goes through twice. I tried out as a taster a while back. Tasters don't taste for flavor. They taste for uniformity. I tried to do everything right—no food, no cigarettes. And the whiskey tasted like nothing. A real taster asked me, when I drank at home did I smoke? I said yes. So smoke, he said. I lit up, and that made all the difference. That's a warehouse up there—that big seven-story building. The windows are narrow, so nobody can slide a barrel through, and they're barred, so nobody can break in. And this little acreage here is where your land is." We got out and walked across a grassy slope. "Now, I'd say your land is right about here. Under this old oak tree. Or, if you'd rather, over yonder under that old muscadine vine. You can take your choice."

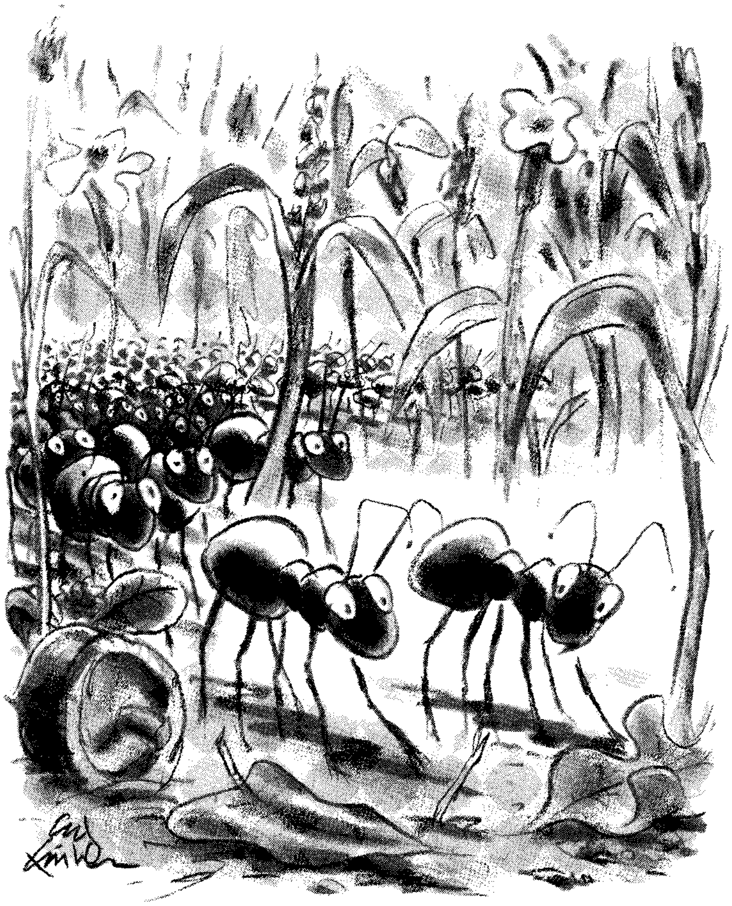
I should add that I had lunch—I mean dinner—at the restaurant called Miss Mary Bobo's Boarding House. It occupies a stately white-pillared house just off the town square, and it opened its doors to the public in 1908. Miss Mary died in 1983, one month shy of a hundred and two. It is operated now by a great-grandniece of Jack Daniel, a pretty young woman named Lynne Tolley, and it's a family-style restaurant. I sat with eleven others (Miss Tolley among them) at a table in one of five dining rooms. The food was already on the table—meat loaf in a rich tomato sauce, fried chicken, fried okra, butter beans, hot biscuits and gravy, grits with garlic cheese, baked apple slices, cranberry relish flavored with Jack, and butterscotch pie. We helped ourselves and passed to the left. We drank iced tea. My bill, paid in advance, was $8.75, including tax.

Together

DORIS and Phil can mean a lot of things. In the first place, two people who live on the Lower East Side with their children, Leon and Odetta, and a dog and a rabbit. It's hard to talk about Doris and Phil separately, but you can try. Doris is Doris Kornish, who grew up in West Virginia and still has a faint but jaunty accent, and who started her own impromptu film society in the college town of Morgantown by renting movies and screening them in her living room. When she moved to New York City, in 1979, she lived in one room on East Tenth Street and danced with Yoshiko Shuma's postmodern company. She is a vegetarian but is interested in all the social aspects of food—especially the happy marriage of pizza and beer. Kornish is a shortened version of a Polish name, probably Konisciewicz. Doris doesn't tell you her age, but her smile is young and uncomplicated and quick to flash on. Phil is Philip Hartman, who grew up on Long Island and is embarrassed to admit that he went to Princeton but doesn't mind admitting that he concentrated on film and started the film society there. (He thinks it's a disgrace that Princeton didn't have a film society until then, which was 1974.) Phil's parents expected him to major in urban studies, and they still sometimes mention the possibility of law school to him. He has always loved food and eats all kinds, and he's of Polish descent, too, but from the other side of the Polish-American tracks from Doris. He's thirty-four but looks twenty-five, and in the early eighties he moved in and out of seventeen sublets, until Doris put what he calls "the emergency brake" on his life, and he moved in with her on Tenth Street.

When you talk about Doris and Phil together, you might be talking about them as restaurant owners. Their main gig right now is a place they own with a partner, John Touhey, at 37 Avenue A. It's called Two Boots, and just inside the door the boot-shaped maps of Louisiana and Italy are worked into the design of the terrazzo; the cuisine is Italian/Cajun. Phil is the guy waiting to take your name, wearing basketball shoes and with a pencil behind his ear. He'll suggest that you wait at the bar, and if you do you can order a boot of Rolling Rock on tap (the glass is actually shaped like a boot and holds more than a regular mug) and admire the bar's surface, which is a kind of sculpture—a collection of objects mummified under what looks like shellac but is actually polyester resin, according to Doris, who pulled two all-nighters creating this work. (Is Doris an artist, too? Ask Phil. He'll say, "Doris? Uncategorizable.") Immortalized in the counter are a string of Mardi Gras beads, a stick of Doublemint gum, programs and flyers from meetings and events around the East Village, a baby picture of Doris's best friend, and a digital watch, bearing the Mack Truck logo, that Doris says was still working when she poured on that polyester.

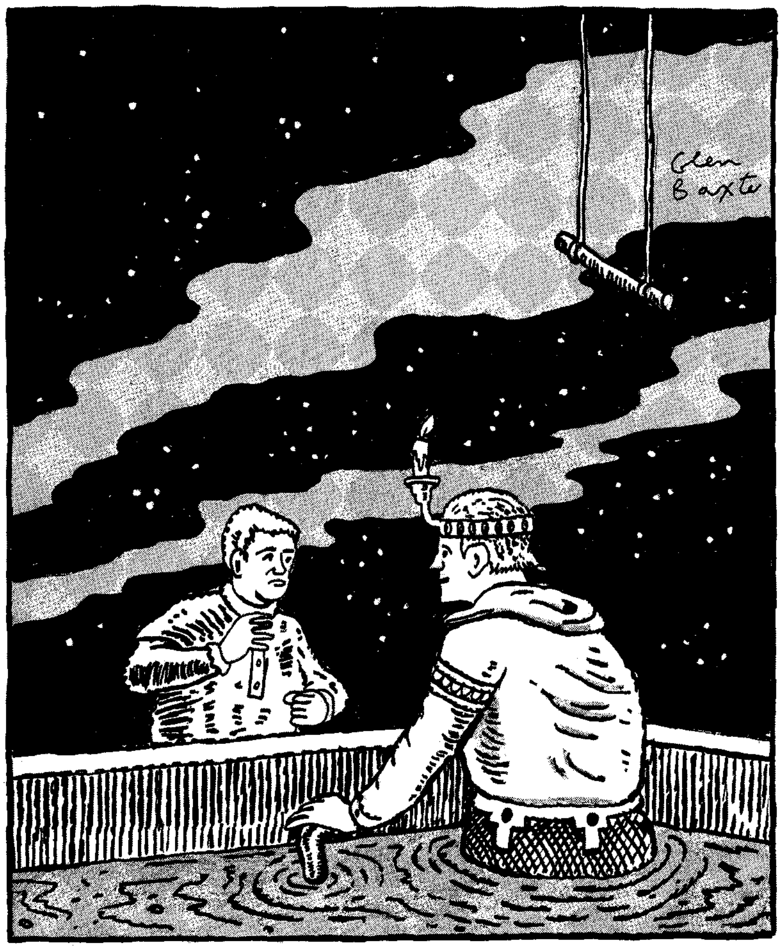
At Doris and Phil's restaurant, you can order ravioli with jalapeño pesto or spaghetti with a jambalaya-inspired sauce or a catfish Po'Boy sandwich, and some of the things you can have on pizza are crawfish, eggplant, andouille, and barbecued shrimp. Neither Doris nor Phil grew up expecting to go into the restaurant business, but they were the people who, in 1983, opened the famous Great Jones Café, with a friend of Phil's from high school. The Jones, as they call it, was one of the first Cajun places in the city, and came into being during the wilder days of Doris and Phil, before they had their kids—they could spend a lot of nights waitressing and bartending together, and carrying on. They eventually sold that restaurant to a guy who had started as a dishwasher there. "He understood the spirit of the Jones," Phil says.



"It's going to be tough switching over to individual private enterprise."

While you're eating at Two Boots, you will probably keep getting up from your seat to examine the jukebox, which has everything on it from Dean Martin to the Sex Pistols, with some groovy East Village bands in between, like The Raunch Hands and The World Famous Blue Jays. Doris and Phil handpick every song on there. If you play "Brilliant Corners," by Monk, you won't be able to hear the whole tune at one go, because it covers both sides of a 45. It'll play Side 1, then play one of your other selections while it cues up Side 2, and then finish. As it happens, the protagonist of Doris and Phil's movie works for a jukebox company, and spends a lot of time cruising around in a beat-up VW van looking for rare 45s and servicing jukeboxes in gritty bars. But that's in the *movie*, which you can talk about if you want to talk about another aspect of Doris and Phil together: Doris and Phil as filmmakers.

The movie is called "No Picnic," and it's playing till August 19th at the Anthology Film Archives, at the corner of Second Avenue and Second Street. Phil wrote and directed, Doris produced. It's in black-and-white, and the camerawork, which was done by Peter Hutton, makes the hottest weeks of summer in the city look eerie and troubled and strangely inviting. Mac, the jukebox-record changer (played by David Brisbin), is a down-and-out kind of guy who lives in a tenement building that's in the midst of a rent strike, and there's a great scene at the opening of the film where he comes in from the dirty street to his cramped apartment and runs a bath in the tub that stands in his kitchen. You know it's a *cold* bath, although no one says it. There's also a great scene in which Mac sees his girlfriend being kissed by another man in Adam Purple's circular Garden of Eden, on Eldridge Street; he hovers behind a tree watching, in French-farce-like horror, but it's a thrill to see that garden—which is gone now—in all its lushness. If you talk to Doris and Phil about their movie, one of the first things Phil says is that most of the places in it—nearly all of it was shot on the Lower East Side during the summer of 1985—are gone now. Doris says they filmed at as many of their favorite neighborhood locations as possible—about a hundred and fifty. Phil says this is the opposite of what independent filmmakers tend to do: limit themselves to a very few locations and a handful of actors. Doris says that in "No Picnic" there are at least a hundred actors. Then she says, "Actors! Well, *people*."

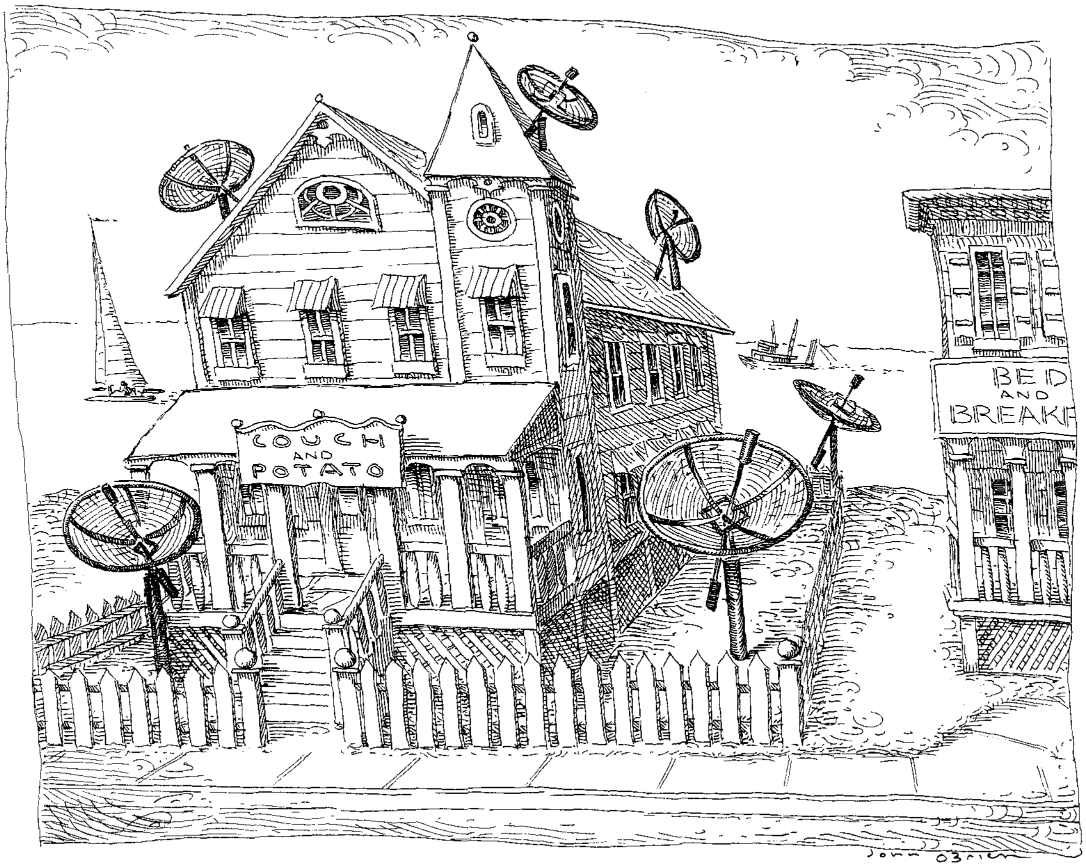


I WAS DEALING WITH A DANGEROUS MAN WHO AT ANY MOMENT MIGHT BURST INTO A SELECTION FROM "THE PAUL McCARTNEY SONGBOOK."

One of the surprises of Doris and Phil's movie is some gorgeous baseball footage; at one point, down-and-out Mac escapes to the ballgame. In order to get those shots, Doris and Phil had to sneak into the stadium of a certain New York team—of which they are huge fans, and for whose games they hold season tickets—with their camera equipment disassembled and stashed under their clothing. "But our seats weren't all in one place, and when we got in there we discovered that we had the camera itself down on the lower deck and the film in the upper deck," Phil says. "It took us awhile to get it together." They finally got shots of the last few innings, and of the actors (their friends, that is) sitting in the stands, and of the big panels of lights going out in sequence around the stadium after the game. Doris made a lot of calls to the offices of the New York team, trying to get permission to use this material in "No Picnic," but "they didn't care, or they couldn't relate to what I was asking them," she says. "Well, I tried." Doris is not so sure she wants to produce Phil's next movie, which takes place in the Caribbean community in Brooklyn. As the producer of "No Picnic," she had to make a lot of tricky phone calls, all with Leon in a playpen in her office. (Doris and Phil didn't have a babysitter then.) One of the most important calls Doris made was to Phil, when he was in the middle of setting up a shot, in order to tell him, "I want you to know your son just took his first step."

Cards

WHEN Tom Rassieur decided to take a job last fall as a curatorial assistant in the department of prints and photographs of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he was not motivated by a strong predilection for the museum's baseball-card collection. Part of Mr. Rassieur's lack of enthusiasm was rooted in ignorance ("I thought baseball cards were put in bike spokes, not museums," he has said), and part was a function of taste (he prefers Rembrandt and Dürer). In any event, there is in the print room's collection a 1910 T206 Honus Wagner—universally regarded as the most famous and most valuable baseball card in existence—and Mr. Rassieur, a self-taught print connoisseur, is its steward. "To be honest," Mr. Rassieur said the other day, while seated at his desk in the print room, "I wasn't too familiar at first with the man." In time, however, he learned the story of the jug-eared Hall of Famer, the Pittsburgh Pirates shortstop who in his twenty-one-year career compiled a .329 batting average, won eight batting titles, still holds the National League record for career triples, and was known in his day as the Flying Dutchman. As far as Mr. Rassieur is concerned, the most significant fact about Wagner is his militant stand against smoking. In 1910, Wagner went as far as to force the American Tobacco Company to withdraw



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his picture from a series of baseball cards it was distributing inside its packs of Sweet Caporal cigarettes. Perhaps a few dozen copies of the card made it out of the factory; last year, one of them sold for a hundred and fifteen thousand dollars.

Mr. Rassieur's passion for Old Master prints lacks relevance for most of the visitors who drop by the print room—the ones who knock on the door and ask, "Excuse me, sir, is this the baseball-card room?"

"I love Old Master prints more than anything, but most people who make an appointment to visit our collection have no interest in seeing them," he said. "They just want to see Wagner and some of the other items in the Jefferson R. Burdick collection of paper Americana."

Jefferson Burdick is considered the father of baseball-card collecting—in fact, of American-printed-ephemera collecting. In 1947, however, when he showed up at the Met offering to donate his collection, the curator of the print room, A. Hyatt Mayor, had no idea that Burdick had accumulated some three hundred thousand baseball cards, postcards, and playing cards. Mayor accepted the offer, but when the first shipment, of several thousand items, came in, that December, he observed with some surprise that "this honor brought responsibility." (Later, he wrote of Burdick, "The energy that he might have put into making a home and bringing up a family, he poured instead into studying insert cards.") Though Burdick was crippled by arthritis, he readily took on the arduous task of mounting his hundreds of thousands of cards—including virtually every single baseball card made between the eighteen-eighties and 1950—in big albums: three hundred and ninety-four of them, all told. It was a labor that lasted sixteen years. The day Burdick mounted his last card, he said as he left the print room, "I shan't be back." He entered the hospital the next day, and died two months later.

The protocol for viewing the cards goes like this: Anybody can make an appointment to see them, but children must be accompanied by an adult. After being buzzed into the print room, a visitor is seated at a table with a list of the three hundred and ninety-four albums, and Mr. Rassieur produces the requested album from ceiling-to-floor bookshelves in the back room. His favorite moments come when he opens the first album for a visitor, he said. Many children, it seems, have trouble comprehending Burdick's motives. "A lot of them want to know if he was crazy," Mr. Rassieur said. "They simply can't believe that somebody *gave away* such a valuable collection. I just tell them that if Mr. Burdick hadn't been so wonderfully generous these cards would be locked up in some bank vault, where no one could ever look at them." Of course, the monetary value of the cards has escalated since 1947, and over the last several years speculators have turned card collecting into something other than an innocent hobby. In 1960, for instance, Burdick put a value of fifty dollars on his Wagner card. Today, Alan Rosen, probably the country's most flamboyant baseball-card impresario, is willing to sell an uncut strip of five cards, including the 1910 Wagner, for two million dollars. "Sure, we've ruined their hobby," Rosen told the *Wall Street Journal* not long ago. "But isn't this what America is all about?"

When we asked Mr. Rassieur to show us his own favorite card, he brought out an album bearing tobacco cards from the nineteenth-century and leafed through its pages until he came upon a series of cardboard caricatures of heavily bearded men playing an unlikely-looking game of baseball. "These were put out for the 1884 Presidential election," he said, and, pointing to two of the more ridiculous-looking figures, he added, "I think that's Grover Cleveland, and that's James G. Blaine."

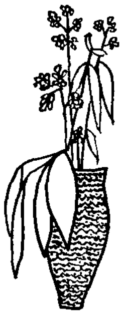
Why were these Mr. Rassieur's favorite cards?

"Because they're not baseball players," he said.

"NAUSEA," THE SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER

George Hamilton has just been great. He didn't have to go on all those morning shows; it wasn't part of his contract. He did it because he believes in the project. But he's just been great. We knew that we were taking an enormous chance, first by making this movie in the first place, and then by releasing it here in the middle of the summer. But we all believe in the project.

For years I admired the novel "Nausea," by Jean-Paul Sartre. It said something very important to me. I still remember the afternoon when I looked up from my table at the Polo Lounge, where I was taking a meeting with Nick Roeg, Bernardo Bertolucci, Preminger, and I think John Cassavetes (we were in the first stages of what was to become the Jerry Lewis "Sartoris" project), and my mind unexpectedly produced the magical Sartre lines—I translate roughly—"I glance around the room and a violent disgust floods me. What am I doing here? Why did I have to get mixed up in a discussion on humanism?" Straight from "La Nausée." I knew that someday, if I got the chance, I would try to make the book into a movie.



Years later, 1987, I was having a drink at L'Ermitage with Sam Spiegel and Peter Guber. I mentioned idly that I had always loved "Nausea" and said I thought it would make a great movie. To my surprise, Guber and Spiegel had both read the book and they both loved it. "God, yes," Sam murmured. "The larva, the presence in the garden. How does it go? 'It was there . . . toppled down into the trees, all soft, sticky, soiling everything, all thick, a jelly.' That's picture-making."

We talked it over. We hammered it out. By twelve we had a deal.

The first question everybody asks is about the casting. I don't want to boast, but I must say that Hamilton was my Roquentin right from the start. Other names came up—Matt Broderick, Eddie Murphy—but I never had the slightest doubt that Hamilton would wind up as Roquentin.

Even before the sets were dressed, we'd moved out on our take-no-prisoners merchandising campaign. We knew this was a necessity because our vehicle is so pure—no killings or shootings or nudity (if you don't count Roquentin's vision in the brasserie of the "fat, hot, sensual, absurd" woman with the red ears). Our picture doesn't try to blow your brains out with a lot of stupid explosions in Dolby. We didn't have any of those things because we're not even looking for an audience on this one; that's why our line of action figures was developed. Since our project isn't aimed at anybody at all, except maybe one or two special people like us, we needed to break even somewhere.

The Roquentin figure. We've got him wearing his trademark black suit with a gray vest and red tie, but we've got him sort of crouched, ready for action. His head turns from side to side and his arms move up and down. He's not scowling, he's not smiling. I guess his expression seems to say to the kids, "I'm ready for action if that's what you really want."

The other action figure is the Marquis de Rollebon, the quasi-historical character that Roquentin finally suspects never really existed. Rollebon is dressed in dark-green, typical eighteenth-century coat and trousers. He's also crouched and ready to spring into action. He's bent over a little and he's sort of ugly: don't forget that Marie Antoinette called him "dear ape." Rollebon is ready to roll.

Besides the action figures, we also have these simulated pebbles. There are eight colors and we think that kids will collect them all. They're molded in plastic, and, like I said, in different colors. But each one looks like the pebble Roquentin picked up—that was the first time he was overcome by an overpowering sense of disgust. We call them the "Disgust Pebbles."

We also have the "Disgust Mirror." This is just like the one in the movie. We hope that kids will be looking at themselves in these mirrors all summer, just like Roquentin, and comprehending absolutely nothing about what they are as human beings. Maybe it will catch on and maybe it won't. But we're gambling that it will.

Of course we also have the "Nausea Café," with miniature "Nausea People." The customers are all carefully crafted so that their tiny faces are just an accumulation of details—eyes, ears, nose, hat (three have hats), mouth—all totally devoid of meaning.

The T-shirts represent a considerable part of all this. "The Agonizing Death of a Sunday Afternoon" might be the major shirt. A lot of people seem to like the one with Roquentin overcome by a momentary sense of bliss. This will be next summer and that might be big with vacationers. You'll also be seeing a lot of young people wearing big white T-shirts with black block letters: "The Body Lives Alone." That much is pretty certain.

Let's talk about the poster, which is quite remarkable. All black, just Hamilton's face against a black background and down in the lower right-hand corner in yellow: "J'existe" ("I Exist"). It's going to get people. We're going to see that in a few dorms.

The soundtrack is a major thing. All of the people we had on this were wonderful. M. C. Hammer's title tune, "Gushing Toward the Sky," will probably get a lot of airplay. Personally, I love Kid Creole and the Coconuts doing "I Like You Physically, But You Do Not Exist Intellectually." And then there's the great rap song—Run-D.M.C. expect to go platinum with this by the second week—of "This Thing I'm Sittin' On," which, of course, comes straight from the script, and, before that, the novel: "This thing I'm sitting on . . . is called a seat." Authenticity. This is done for love, so why not get it right?

Did I mention "Viscous Stuff"? In "Nausea," if you recall, things that are viscous absorb our humanity. This is available in tubes.

Now that "Nausea: The Picture" is history, I have to say that it's hard to believe it ever happened. Right from the start, there was this sense of uselessness about the whole thing. On the very first day of shooting, everybody was sort of looking at the floor, and when the director asked for our attention he got up and said, "I am free: there is absolutely no more reason for living," and all of us, right down to the grips, nodded in understanding. This is the spirit of "Nausea," and I think you'll see that when you go and see the movie. Or don't go, as the case may be. As Jean-Paul says, you have the right to exist and therefore the right not to do anything at all.

—Frank Gannon

JOURNALS

FROM THE LATE FORTIES AND THE FIFTIES—II

On my first night in Rome I walk to the Spanish steps. I am a little disappointed. But I find the people very handsome and not covert as is the case at home. The girls lovely and the men good-looking, gallant. When I see an American he does not seem as well integrated or as well dressed. We are not a nation of voyeurs but we seem introspective. I have not been happy here, and waking at three in the morning I worry about everything. But there is no point in writing a story about poor Bierstubbe, the TV writer who came to Rome to write a great play about sex; who was short-changed everywhere, whose money flowed like water, who was depressed by the dash of the Roman men and reminded of his own contested sexual identity, who wondered why he had ever left his cozy home, who drank gin before lunch, etc. So I will not write any such story.

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Poor Bierstubbe, very homesick, watching people on the Via Veneto boarding the airplane bus for the U.S.A. Never in his life, not even as an infantry private under a sergeant who was court-martialled for cruelty and drunkenness, had Bierstubbe been so homesick. And, having dreamed half his life of sailing away, he dreamed away his days and nights of sailing home.

The hassle with the real-estate agents which seems to come to nothing, although there was no legal or emotional difficulty that I did not imagine. Leaving the Palazzo Doria at five or six—the tumult of a great city at nightfall—much worried and sorely wanting a drink.

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It is four o'clock and I am in Rome and want a drink. Out of my window I see an orange house which is being turned into apartments and a man walking out of an alleyway in little steps as he buttons up his fly. Mary and Susie have gone out to meet Ben, home from his first day in school. I went to the American Express this morning and found my money waiting. I had been sure that this would not happen. Then I went to the Società Romana di Elettricità with La Signora Muni, where I saw some people of considerable beauty. Through my head run such scraps as this: my life is in the nature of a bargain and a very fair one; I believe in the miraculousness of life but my belief has never been so strained; this painful sense of not having a well-integrated body or mind is all the fault of my poor dead mother, whose life was so ridden with anxiety; look at the pretty girl; pray; of the two—the duchess in a mink coat and the wide-eyed child with a little hump to her shoulders—I prefer the child; perhaps this journey from one country to another puts too searching a light on the jerry-built structure of my life; a searching light is being brought to bear; people speak of Rome as we used to speak of Scout camp—you will hate it for two weeks and then you will not want to leave. So the intelligent thing is to ride out these storms of strangeness and see where you are in two weeks or a month. And so we leave the Società Romana di Elettricità.

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After lunch I walk in the streets and observe how the facial traits of the people differ from the massive and weary countenances of the emperors and their wives. It may be no accident that much of the Roman portrait statuary we see in America reminds us of Americans. I don't know. And the ease and grace with which they embrace one another, call after the pretty girls, kiss in doorways or sit on the wall up by the Gianicolo with a girl held cozily between their legs is very different from our idea of things. This is not a difference of language, race, climate, or custom; it is a vastly different approach to the wellsprings of humanity.

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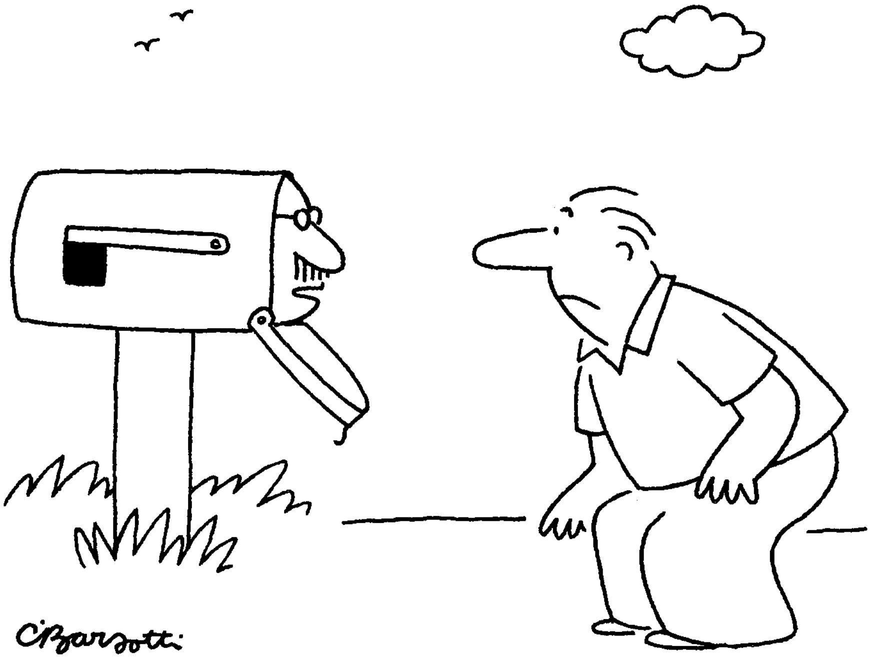
This is the kitchen of the Palazzo Doria, where I hope we will pass an affectionate and a useful year. The gas stove leaks. The drains are clogged. It is a dark day in Rome with a heavy rain. This is not classical weather. Ben and Mary are both coughing. Susie went off to school in tears. This is the first time in nearly a month that I have sat down and tried to make sense, and now my thoughts, gathered at rainy street crossings and high windows, in damp churches and strange beds at 3 A.M., and gathered often about the full limbs of comely strangers, seem about to leave me.

First there was the voyage, and this was ruled by my fear that the ship



"It's O.K., I'm with the government."

would sink. I don't think a day passed without my being made uncomfortable by this foolishness. And when I woke, at 3 A.M., to the noise of smashing flower vases and medicine bottles, my parts would shrink and my heart would flutter like a lark. This is a deck, I would tell myself, walking back and forth; these are stanchions, these are lifeboats and that is an empty swimming pool, and these momentary things are the usable truths, but then seeing darkness off the bow, and in the west a prophetic and baneful light, and noticing that the speed of the ship had slacked off until she hardly seemed to move, I would feel sure that we were done for. Off the starboard bow I saw the snow-covered mountains of Corsica and thought that this would be a dangerous coast to land our boats on.

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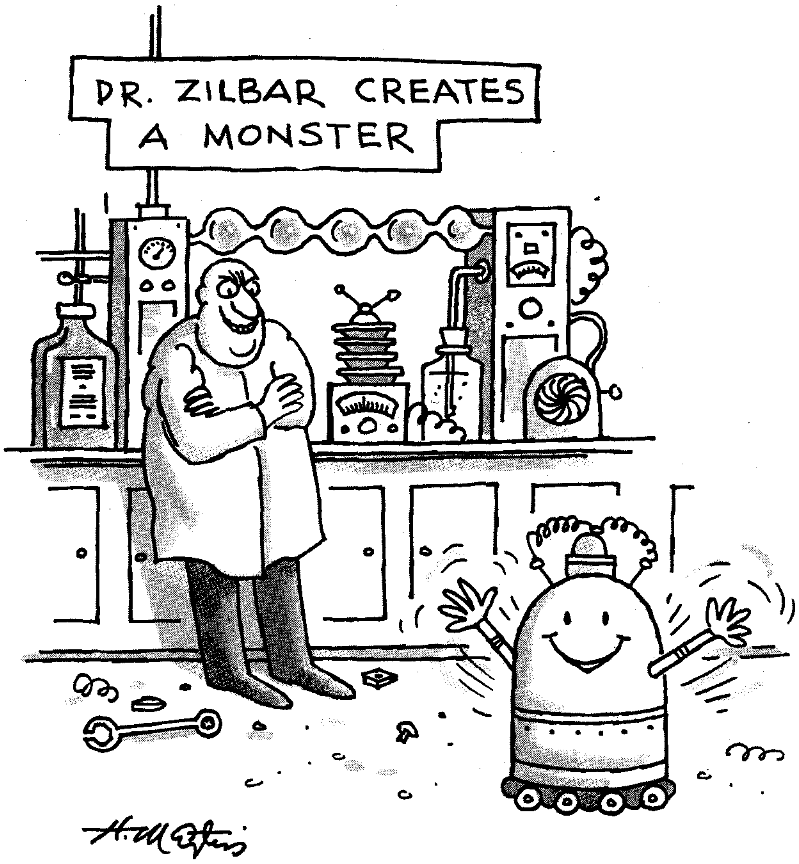
As for ruins, the American printing salesman who has flown in for an eight-hour conference says, in the bar of his run-down hotel, "Jesus, you can see where we all come from: I mean the sense of the past is so *terrific*." But it is not always easy to come by. The guidebooks, the guides, our friends and acquaintances, and even strangers urge us to succumb to the sense of the past, but what about the present? Standing in the Pantheon I am impressed with the dome, but the children are pulling at my coat and asking me to buy them pastry or take home one of the splendid cats loafing under the portico. Going to meet E. at the Baths of Caracalla in a rainy dusk, I look in briefly at the colossal heaps of brick and then watch some kids practicing soccer shots on a little field. I am much more interested in them. Ben and I walk by the Forum, which, with the green grass still growing among the stones, seems to be a double ruin: a ruin of antiquity and a monument to the tender sentiments of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers, for we see not only the ghosts of Romans here but the shades of ladies with parasols and men with beards and little children rolling hoops. In the Colosseum I tell Ben that Christians were devoured by lions, although I think this is untrue. I am impressed with the massive outer archways—and yet I am not taken as directly by a sense of the past as I was in a Portsmouth countinghouse. We strive to feel the presence of Romans and then we pet a stray cat.

Homesickness here is not a string of specific images, evoking the pathos and sweetness of American life; it is mostly purse sickness, war sickness, the unease of not understanding the simplest remarks that are made and the chagrin of being swindled. I don't long for the rivers or for the place-names or the mill-town parks. Not honestly.

"This is your past," we say to the Romans and the Americans from small towns. I have a past—houses and people and traits and an old name. The Mediterranean is not a part of it. And yet I have dreamed of the Mediterranean for ten years; it is in some way a part of our dreams.

The rain lets up at noon and either the moods of this city or my own are mercurial. The sun bursts into the streets. Life is exciting and beautiful, and the sound of so many fountains is relaxing. I look with scorn at the Americans in the Piazza di Spagna, ripping open their letters from home and stopping in the middle of the sidewalk to read the news from Pelham, but receiving a letter myself I do the same. Smiling and chuckling, I walk down the street bumping into Romans, with a scrap of paper that seems to refresh my identity.

Mary and I lunch at a trattoria near the Pantheon. The fountain sparkles in the sun. We walk under the great porch and through the giant doors. It is impossible to mark the proprietorship of pagan and Christian, but the dome with its circle of blue seems triumphantly clear and free. As Americans we observe the ruined paint and the filth. The candlesticks and tombs of the Lombards are black with dirt. Even the wax of the candles is dark and the flowers on Raphael's tomb are straw. Some other Americans come in. They are followed by a guide. "I just want to look at the place; I don't want to hear about it," one lady says to the guide. "And anyhow I can't understand what you're saying." Back here I snooze on the sofa, then go to meet Susie, climbing up the Campidoglio. Flooded with light it seems very rich, but the heads of the Dioscuri seem large and only intensify my affection for Marcus Aurelius and his shadow of gold. I walk up through the gardens, thinking that I will push a baby carriage here in the spring. The wind is northerly and the sky is full of that moving darkness and brilliance that we see through the


DR. ZILBAR CREATES A MONSTER

"Have a nice day! Have a nice day! Have a nice day! Have a nice day! Have a . . ."

fine dark leaves of many painted trees in many landscapes in many museums. Susie buys a doughnut in a *pasticceria* and we meet Ben. There is a gas strike. Dinner is delayed and I fill up with gin. Susie tells me that a boarder at school has stolen a pot of jam and the mother superior has put the school into Coventry. Prayers are said each morning for the thief. If this were at home we would rebel. We have a fine dinner, but after dinner I find Susie in bed, crying bitterly and asking to be taken home. This for Bierstubbe when I get around to him: the crying of his children.

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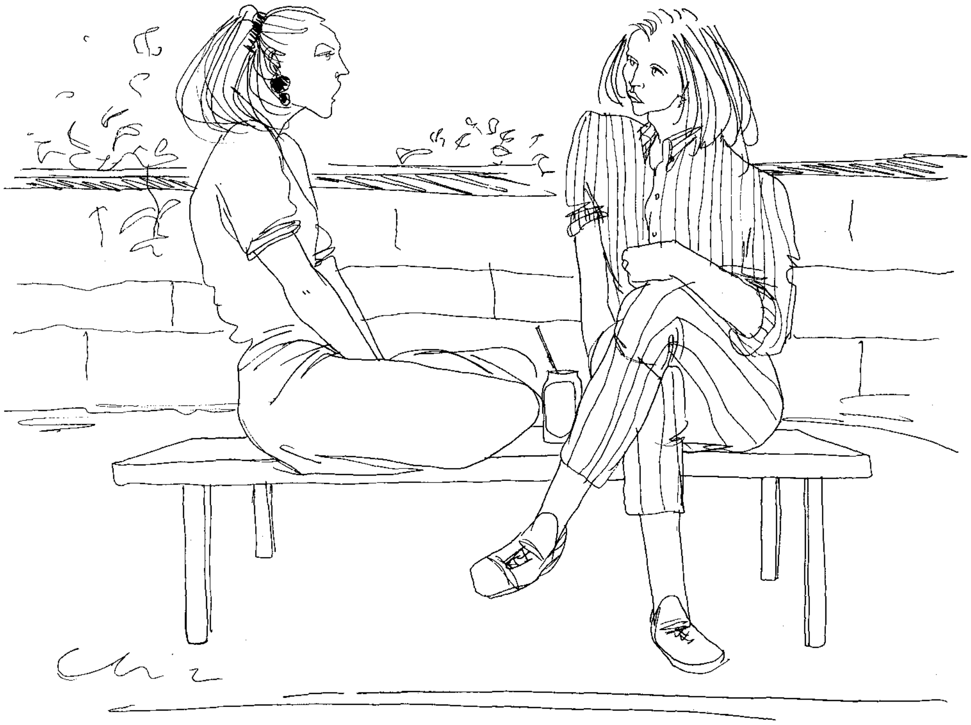
We go to the Museo del Palazzo di Venezia. So cold it would chill your marrow. Shabby and unclean and the paintings so ill lit that half of them can't be seen. The glare of light on the varnish is so harsh that we can't make out what is going on. A painted ceiling where much is going on. Sea monsters abducting naked women. A roomful of bronzes, copies of which I think I've seen. Some lewd, some satyrs, a firm figure of a man. An armory and much early painting but not easy to see or admire. The gold gleams, but the faces seem dim and strange. It is, I think, this jumble of arsehole jokes and golden piety that I admire; it adds up to an honest measure of our nature. In one of the rooms we find all the guards smoking cigarettes and shooting five-lire coins down a long table.

We sit in the sun and climb to the Campidoglio. It is autumn, but it is best for me not to say, "It Is Autumn In Rome" but just "it is autumn." The grass on the slope is that crabgrass which takes hold at the end of summer. A few marigolds bloom in the plots. Tourists are as scarce as flowers and a guide trails us around the statue of Marcus Aurelius, complaining about the autumn and the bad business. A crowd of Americans comes up from the Forum but they do not say a word. The only sound is the whirr of moving-picture cameras and the click of shutters. Going down the Campidoglio we pass a party of Germans. The yellow snapdragons that grow out of the cornice of the Church of Jesus, the tufts of grass and mullein that grow, like hair from a man's nostril, from every orifice in Aurelian's wall, the bluets that grow in the chinks of the Porta Pinciana, and the thick stand of grass around the bell tower of Santa Maria have all begun to fade.



"No more carpenter-turned-director types, either!"

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What I am determined to get away from are set pieces, closed things, shut paragraphs.

The doorways of Europe, varnished and polished and waxed, even if the houses they secure are crumbling, in this vast city that is painted the color of spoiled lemons. The high doorways of Portugal with their stained-glass transoms built to accommodate a thin and a melancholy man on stilts. And the *portoni* here, built to withstand armed men on horseback and battering rams. You turn the key in the lock and the cumbersome door swings open. This is your place. You, among the many people on the street, have the key. When you close the door behind you it is dark and cold and the noise of the fountain sounds very loud. You unlock the elevator gate, part the frosted-glass doors . . .

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I take the children riding in the Borghese gardens. The old baron trots along beside the moth-eaten pony that Ben rides. Susie rides with an instructor. A man rides a white horse strenuously, bringing it again and again to a jump where it balks. "*Che brutto*," say the grooms. When he is finished the horse is in a lather and the rider, when he dismounts, is breathing heavily and seems drawn and tired. He is a small man. I wait and watch the children and for a moment—not much longer—the place, the gardens seem to enter my head and I think, I hope, of possessing an earlier and happier view of Rome. I wonder what it is that I lack. I wonder if I have ever seen any place without the excitement of falling in love; at least of making friends. I make no friends here, and Mary's fine condition cuts down on my sport. And I wonder if what I long for—shoot at—is not the pleasures of a young man in love. I see the details. San Pietro in Vincoli, Vittorio Emanuele, and the two charioteers on the monument, all moving off toward the same compass point—St. Peter's. And I travel, admittedly, with a good deal of useless emotional baggage: hunger, thirst, anxiety, and cold feet—all things that plainly cloud my vision. My ambition is to familiarize myself with the city—to include it—and not at a literary level. Mary drinks tea with a divorcée on the Via Veneto. "Oh, the light was so beautiful," she says, "and we didn't see an American." She seems to see the thing more clearly than I.

A reception in a palazzo; the quintessence of Roman dreariness. Rooms that were meant to be lit by candles or maybe torches do not seem to lend themselves happily to the kind of indirect lighting that latter-day Romans go in for. The upshot is a dimness or dinginess that has an appreciable effect on my spirits. My feet ache from standing, but if I sit down I may get trapped. Butlers pass trays of bad brandy and bonbons. Ciardi complains about Rome. "If I'd known it was going to be like this," he says, "I *wouldn't have come." It is dreary; it* is dreary; it is like the bus to the Termine Flaminio at rush hour on a rainy night; it is like pouring bad wine for dull guests.

LOVE SONG TO THE WORLD LEADERS

When I lie back it's as if you said to me
"Once there was an island" and at once there's nutmeg
in every house and I am in a hammock in the green
trees, and prides of grasses are roaring.
When I lie back it's as if I thought
you wouldn't dare to shake me or let me
fall, as if I thought your arms so strong they'd
hold forever, rope bridges over crevasses: there
is a pool down there, and blue-green water
in bare-sand rocks.
It's as if I were not dizzy.

And when I get up, I can see the whole
black island in sunlight sink in the sea,
tilting. A spray flies up when it's under.
It's as if you'd told me "Once there was an island
and so forth, so on," already lying.
It's almost as if it had never been.

—Elizabeth Macklin

• •

It seems to me that in the United States the contest between youth and age or between youth and un-youth, between those men whose hash has been settled and those who are still in the throes of a gruelling search, is exacerbated to the point of sexuality and sometimes brutality. The hood under the street light, with his tight pants and his snap knife, and the well-dressed businessman, walking his wife's poodle in the park, exchange a look of naked detestation—murder. The natural fact of a difference in age has made them enemies. I do not seem to find this in Europe. These may be difficulties of my own, but we will see.

•

I am uneasy, beset by emotional chills and drafts. Back here I see the fine sky from the windows and at five o'clock I read *The New Yorker* and drink a Martini.

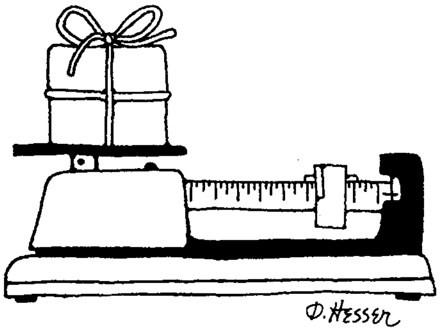
What I escape is the alcoholic life of a minor literary celebrity in Westchester; also the trying company of people I dislike; also perhaps a degree of sexual anxiety, based on some unhappiness in my youth and refreshed by the same scenes and types—scenery and people I don't see here. And I escape the languor of wanting to escape.

•

And walking back from the river I remember the galling loneliness of my adolescence, from which I do not seem to have completely escaped. It is the sense of the voyeur, the lonely, lonely boy with no role in life but to peer in at the lighted windows of other people's contentment and vitality. It seems comical—farcical—that, having been treated so generously, I should be stuck with this image of a kid in the rain walking along the road shoulders of East Milton.

•

To Naples for a day. I felt so heavy-hearted and sad here at parting, as if I might never return. Also premonitions of illness sweep my frame and of being found murdered and naked in a back street. Leaving Rome, the sense of leaving an immense physical and intellectual explosion; the ruins of. South, all the fruit trees are in bloom and all the gardens green; but he looks out of the window, appalled at this reflection of his life, a creation of physical comfort and the ability to attract affection. I walk in Naples, up past the Rotunda and the Palace to the Galleria and drink a vermouth. I have my shoes shined by a man who says he will pray for my wife and my family, and I say we will need these prayers. Dinner with the Warrens, much loud music, and I take another walk and go to bed. In the dining room, an American ham with scrambled eggs and make it snappy. I start for the museum, in two minds about the Pompeian frescoes. It is morning in a strange city, even as in Glens Falls. The sun bright, people hurrying through the smell of coffee to work. In the museum much to see and many relics of a licentious civilization and I wonder where the frescoes are. Then I am taken in hand by a guard who does not want to show me shady frescoes but fine paintings, and I think then, Ah, this, this is life. But then I enter another room where the poor guard tries to do no more than is done on the walls and I escape, my teeth chattering with the cold. I wool-gather about this, walking back in the sunlight—smell of burned coffee, church bells, and then at a turn in the street I step into the smell of the sea, strong and fresh, and my woolgathering is ended. The smell is persuasive, and this persuasion is: to have faith in men. There in that dark gallery for a minute or two we stumble on midnight, on the borders of the conscience, where we doubt the promise in the faces of strangers, we doubt that life has any spiritual value. Then I lunch with the Warrens and board a first-class local, a little compartment lined with red plush like a box at the opera, and so we speed north



again toward Rome, me in the company of an old man, a young student, and a soldier. I see the fruit trees again and the trees hung with vines and the famous sea, and rising from the shacks of a disreputable summer resort a round tower and, with it, memories of heroes, purple cloth, its splendor and its disappearance. And then I can only exclaim, watching the country in the dusk, how incomprehensible life is: there is the son my wife carries, the guard caressing the marble limbs of Achilles, the smell of the sea, the love I bear my children, the fruit trees that seem to make their own light in the dusk, the conversation among the three passengers, which I cannot understand, the sparse farmhouse lights, the carts and bicycles on the roads leading into every village.

•

A copy of the book arrives, and also a generous letter from S.B., and I am intoxicated or at least upset—mostly because I may commit the sin of pride; find humility difficult to arrive at. But if the book is any good it is plain luck and there is no point in my assuming that it is a product of industry, passionate application, etc. But dizzy with excitement I went out to buy cigarettes, and the pretty girl at the café, quite a flirt, gave me a look of pure uninterestedness and so I am crushed and feel like myself again. But perhaps by seeing the book in print I may be able to put it behind me. It has been a kind of keyhole, a very restricted point of view, and I would like to see it turn into cold pudding so that I can go to something better. I felt that way with the "Goodbye, My Brother" story. For nearly a year it seemed to me an adequate piece of self-expression and then when I reread it one day it was cold pudding and so we proceed.

•

Still with a cold, I walk in Rome after lunch. A nice day, the sun very hot, the last of Carnival. My nose is running and I feel a little strange, all of which, in some way, seems to endear the city to me. I see blue sky through the windows of a ruin. By accident, I approach the tomb of Augustus, with its trimmed greenery, and turn back. I approach the Pantheon and go right down the Navona. The fountains are turned off and the man with the *brutto muso* and the fish between his legs seems to be compensating. The sunny tables of the café I like are full of Americans. They are not pretty, and a skinful of wine and the glare of the sun make them less so. The clock at Sant' Agnese strikes three, and every single one of them—six in all—shoots his cuffs and checks his wristwatch. I turn left and go up a dark street that I do not know. The street rises, a hillock of brick, and out of a narrow alley comes a hunchback or dwarf holding by the hand a child dressed as a fairy princess—a blue gown sparkling with brilliants and pointed silk hat with a long veil. Then I hear drums and see through the dark alley into a little piazza made by the junction of several alleys. There are more stairs and little hillocks of paving, and the squash-colored buildings are more random than usual. I see a woman with a mop of dyed-yellow hair leaning from a window into the sun beside a younger woman with black hair. But it is the drumming that fills the air, it is the drumming that is compelling. Compelling, harsh, as unmusical as the grating beat of a strained heart and so bare that it seems to state the facts of life: lust, hunger, or, if you will, the demands of a full bladder—something inescapable. The company is quite large as these things go. There are two drummers dressed as sailors, two men with tambourines, dressed as sailors, and two dancers, all the costumes shabby and stitched together out of Christmas leftovers in some cold hill kitchen and the whole thing dictated by a tradition that is probably no better known to the Romans than it is to me. So the dancers move around one another to the music of the gallows drum. They are both men, one dressed like a prince or grandee and the other like I don't know what. He has a shawl over his head, a mask over his eyes, his back is humped way up above his head, and tied to his groin is an ugly doll with the face of a witch. He wears over his trousers a skirt and an apron. The dance is stamped out on the paving: primitive, simple, full of sexual movement performed with perfect weariness and indifference, and when it is done the whole company marches on—the drumming has never stopped and I can still hear it as I head for the Corso. Here I see, in a traffic jam, a boy in a *carrozza*, dressed as an Indian prince, his face all powder and rouge, scattering confetti. I go into Gesù to say my prayers. All the front pews are taken by

men from the German college in their red robes. To my left is a man who is either drunk or asleep and who changes his position with a thump, while I pray, but who goes on sleeping. Back here the children throw confetti from the balcony and I take my temperature, which is normal. Then we go to hear four Beethoven sonatas—violoncello and piano. Very good. Such music seems to me, more than anything else, proof of peaceable intent.

I hope to go without strong drink before lunch, but if Mary has our baby today I think I will ask an indulgence. And sitting at the breakfast table today I think about the anarchic possibilities of human conduct, which seem, without light, to be inestimable.

•

On the day after my son is born, I wake up filled with good wishes for him: courage, love, virility, a healthy sense of self, and workable arrangements with God. I will climb Mount Chocorua with him. I tell the maid and then the children how fine he is. I am very excited and, still having a cold, find my eyes sore and watery. I do not go to church, feeling that this observance is not necessary. I take the bus with Ben and Susie to the hospital. Walking from the bus stop to the gates, we pass through a dark turn in the streets—I mean emotional darkness. K. has told me that a murder was committed here and I think I detect an atmosphere of sexual roughhouse, the smell of piss, a cat sleeping in an ashcan, and some very dirty drawings on the walls, which I examine. In the hospital there is Mary and my fine son and all the things I plan to do for him. I don't ever remember loving a child so much. So then we go home in a bus that is crowded and smelly. I have a drink and feel very odd—the cold, I guess—and looking down from my balcony into the street I covet the freedom of young bucks in open cars going down to Ostia to raise hell, and observe how a man can be given nearly everything the world has to offer and go on yearning. We go to the Palatine after lunch and now I think the world seems very strange, perhaps through the caul of my cold. The sky is lovely, the light brilliant and spotty, but a chilly wind is blowing from some quarter and the leaves turn and move in this, and the uneasy sound reminds me of autumn. I sit here and there in the sun but I cannot get warm and chemical storms or distempers seem to be raging in my veins. Back here and coming down the stairs, for some reason I think what a struggle it is to admit the existence of evil in the world and in ourselves, how difficult it is to strike that balance between our self-expression—our extension—and that which we know to be right.

Back to the hospital again—I am very tired—and then to bed. I wish I could lose this cold.

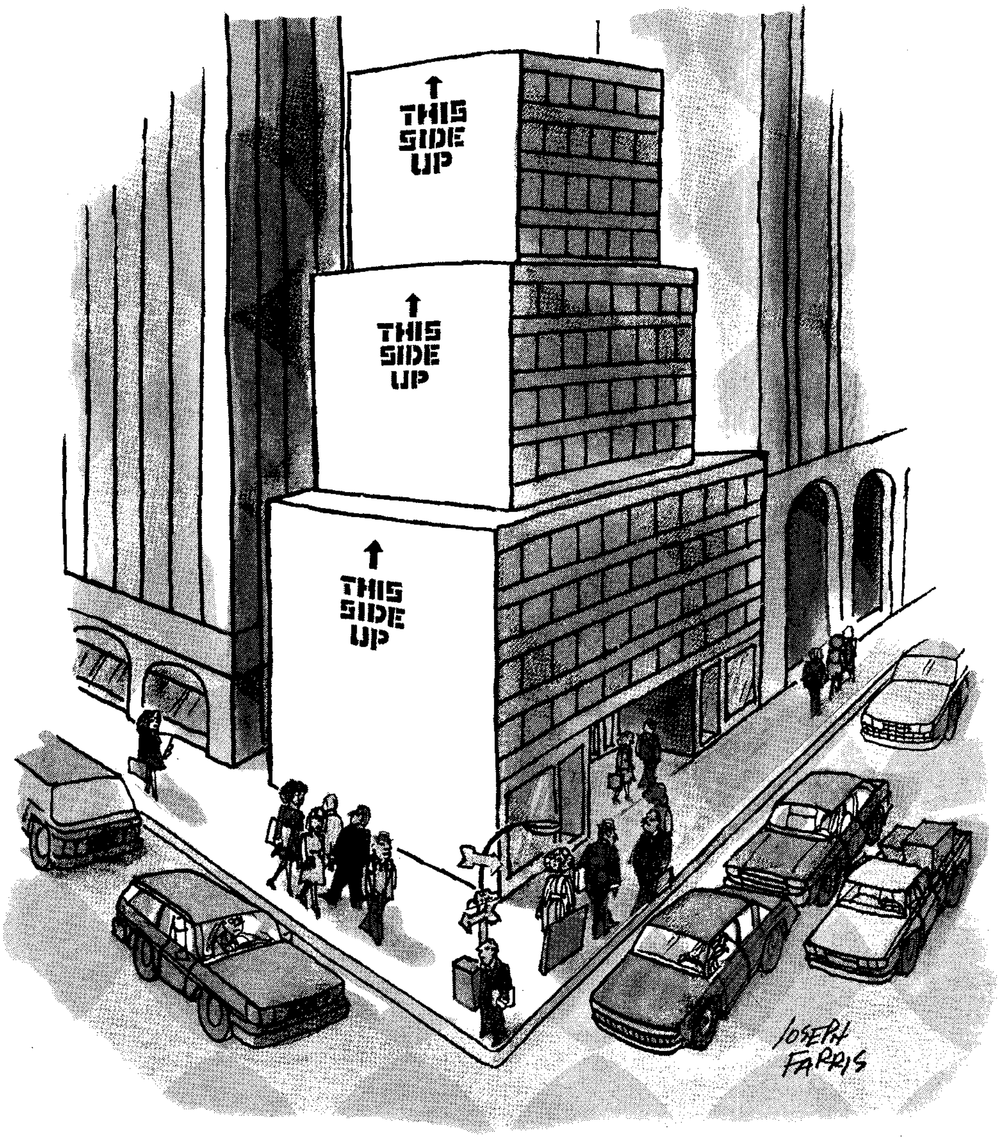
•

To tell the truth, I bemuse myself at three in the morning with the day I win the Pulitzer Prize. I see the story in the Ossining paper, the *Rome-American*, *Il Messaggero*, etc. I also imagine the cable that tells me it has been bought for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, I see an editorial in *Life* with a photograph of me here in the Galleria or coming down the Spanish steps.

Communion breakfast with Susie; frozen orange juice, Nescafé, all things from the PX. A heavy nap after lunch, from which I wake for once refreshed and not depressed—but it is a gray day, the worst kind of day in Rome. Mary takes the children to the zoo and I memorize "*avere*" and take care of Federico, who is fretful and has a cold.

•

Mary says that if the book is a success I will get swell headed, and I think about the nature of success. One does not want to be a failure, a kind of wood violet, and yet perhaps the responsibili-



ties of success are what I dread. I seem to yearn to live behind the scenes. But it is true that when I cannot sleep—when I am unhappy or lonely—I bemuse myself with imagining fourth and fifth printings and the ascent of my name on the best-seller list in the same way that whenever I am unhappy I console myself with imagining pieces of good news.

•

To church for Palm Sunday and my eyes fill with tears. My tears are lewd, I think. I cry at horse races and dirty jokes as readily as I do at the Passion. And I am afraid of sentimentality here—of what someone has called the deliquescent aspects of religion. And at the altar rail, feeling a very deep emotion and challenging it, I say, How else can we express our deepest feelings of aspiration, our determination, in spite of considerable odds, to lead a useful and an inspired life? One can express these things, a rationalist would say, by developing those gifts we have for continence, industry, fairness, love, etc., and yet as I see it there is something else.

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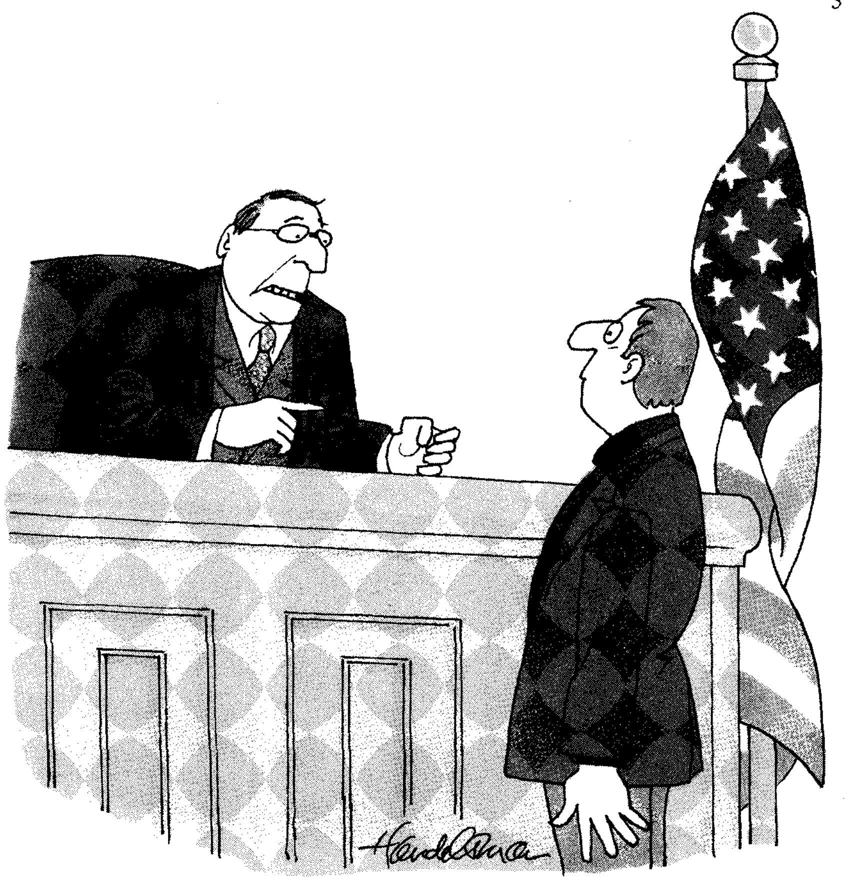


"Let me give you a lesson in American history: James Madison never intended the Bill of Rights to protect riffraff like you."

• •

At seven the sky is all pink and gold; but just as we plan to leave for the Rocca a dark sky moves in over the Campidoglio: thunder, lightning, and torrential rains. I have the wind up—am worried about the driving, everything—and take a pull at the Scotch bottle, which makes me feel considerably better. What I want, I think, walking back from the cigarette store, is the laughter in life, and I think of the old prayer—"Prepare us for adventure, but do not spare us the hazards," etc. The air is dark with swallows, there is more thunder and lightning as we leave. I get the B.s at the Gianicolo and we start down the coast road in unsettled weather. The landscape, or what I see of it from the driver's seat, is lovely, but I say this: that the role of a writer is not to seek out the most beautiful places in the world and describe them—at least not my role. The Campagna is so green that it will seem at dusk to shine. There are thunderclouds over the mountains, streams and spouts of rain, and a clearing over the sea that is the fine blue of clear, saline water—but a richer blue than the Pacific. The whole countryside is a carpet of flowers. I have never seen anything like it, but somehow we are still travellers. We are in a hurry. We look for nothing here that is precious to us. The great Campagna with its cover of flowers is, in a sense, a locked sight. We go through Civitavecchia and under the walls of Tarquinia. The darkness and noise of the storm is still on the mountains. The light over the sea is brilliant. The Rocca is beautiful today. Lupine and snapdragons hang in long garlands from the walls. The air smells of salt. There is a mountain—a dead volcano, I guess, from the looks of the rocks on the beach—and in the distance a hill with a tower or castle, like a few broken teeth. And I miss again the fact that I am not young and in love, for these are the landscapes and places for young lovers. The whole thing seems to unfold as that. So much of the world seems to me to be a place where a young man leads a young girl.

•

I dream about the White House. It is after supper in a bedroom that I have seen on postcards. Ike and Mamie are alone. Mamie is reading the Washington *Star*. Ike is reading "The Wapshot Chronicle."

•

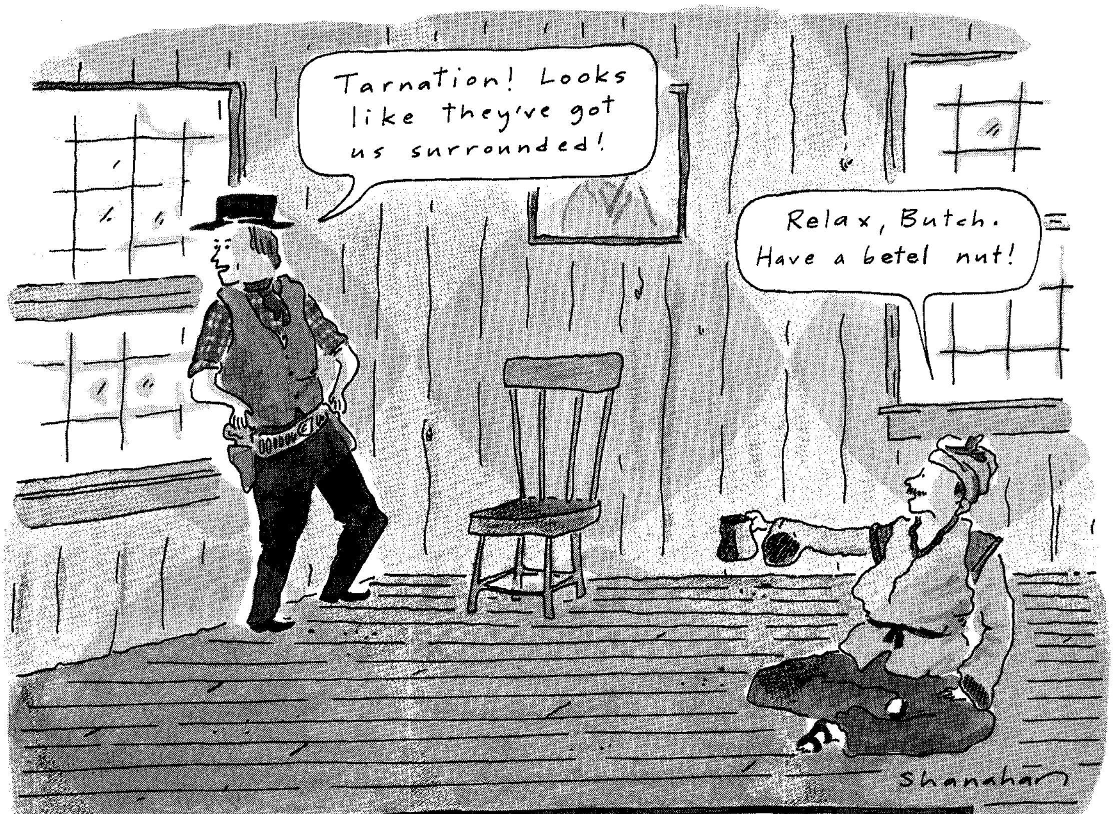
Driving over the Ponte Flaminio to see Susie graduate, we seem very middle-aged. The nuns have worked over the ceremony and it seems sympathetic and comprehensible to me. The last high-school affair I attended, I nearly got into a fight with two hoods who were feeling a little girl in the auditorium. But here there is no conflict between youth and age, chaos and substance. The boys are no less vigorous, but they are polite. And oh, the girls. The chinless one, and N., whose beauty is like an ache and it will be gone, as sure as winter comes, within three years. The girl from Boston with a boy's face, a child's hair ribbon and yellow hair as fine as silk way down back. The nervous girl, the girl with spit curls, the plain girl at the end who nearly fell down. A string trio plays "Pomp and Circumstance" at an excruciatingly slow pace and the girls come down the center aisle like brides, holding flowers, their eyes on the carpet, or peek to the left and right to find their parents or, more often, their friends, since this is an International School and many of their parents are away. Women cry. Men smile foolishly. Everyone is immensely moved at this spectacle of female youth and its wealth of opportunity. Next comes His Excellency all dressed in red, including his complexion. His face is as vast and meaty as a six-rib roast and pursy, too, if you can imagine a pursy roast. Then the Ambassador of Panama compares the girls to a flock of birds, flying hither and yon. He also quotes from Cardinal Newman. His Excellency quotes from Pius XII. Diplomas and prizes are given out. Then the string trio strikes up a capriccio and His Excellency leads the procession into the vestibule. It is so much like a wedding that now the girls beam and smile at everyone. We are presented to His Excellency, the Romans kneeling to kiss his ring and the Protestants manfully shaking his hand. There is punch and sandwiches in the garden. The girls say goodbye and promise to write. I do not fail to get an eyeful of the Princess Barbarini, who looks as she should, only very Madison Avenue. The Prince is nothing. The school stands on a little hill, just outside the boundaries of Rome. Vigna Clara, a new housing development, expensive and unsightly, stands on the next hill. But the valley between the two is still a piece of the Campagna—yellow wheat and red poppies—and the famous shadows are beginning to fall. So we drive back through the traffic jams, the dusty parks, the apartment-house neighborhoods, fashionable and unfashionable—the outskirts of any big city.

A poor day and I wonder how I spoil it. Swimming with a mask, I see my son, swimming with his. It is strange and touching to see him underwater, the little sand he touches rising slowly, like smoke. Sitting on a rock in the sun, I wonder about that emotional debility that strikes me. And it seems that we cannot reform our sexual natures. And there is a point where denial is sheer hypocrisy, with its train of gruelling and foolish anxieties. One must act with a free heart—there can be nothing covert—and seek the best ways of expressing ourselves within the conditions under which we live. And waking I think how narrow and anxious my life is. Where are the mountains and green fields, the broad landscapes?

•

This in the bedroom in Scarborough, and I must find a place to work. After much foolish—senseless—anxiety I pried the nameplate off the door in Rome, loaded the car, and left Rome for Naples, followed by the best wishes of the porter and his wife. We stopped in some place like Terracina for coffee and reached Naples in time for lunch. The hotel was comfortable and seemed elegant, although I think there were bugs in the bed. The next afternoon I took the children up Vesuvius, suffering from vertigo. Coming back on the bus I sat with a pretty Danish actress. I meant to ask her for this and that, to at least send her a copy of the novel, but everything was put off and she left the bus suddenly at the railroad station without my finding out her name. Back at the hotel I had a hooker of whiskey, and standing on the balcony with my glass, looking at a vacant lot, an unfinished building, and the cranes and machines of the port, I yearned, I longed, I seemed to be in love, and so much for this capriciousness. In the morning we hired a car and driver to take us to Pompeii. Our driver was overwrought and spoke English with difficulty. We were joined by two young Americans who seemed so much to be their mother's best, so weary and effeminate, that life seemed completely withheld from them. In the morning, after much sweat and nervousness, we board the ship, and go on deck, after lunch, to make our farewells. After having wondered for so many months about the depth and reality of my love of Italy, after having imagined this scene so many times, I stand at the stern deck, staring at the cliffs along the coast; it all slips and falls away as insignificantly and swiftly as a card house.

"You got some


Tarnation! Looks like they've got us surrounded!
Relax, Butch. Have a betel nut!
Shanahan

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KURD

rope?" an American asks me. "I want to tie on a hat. Ha-ha-ha."

"I'm never going back," an old lady says in the dining room. She sounds petulant; her feelings have been hurt. "I'm accustomed to conveniences," she says, "and now I want them. I lived in a little shack until I was married."

"My daughter keeps buying old houses and doing them over," says another, reminding me of American decorative arts and their curious place in our lives. By dusk there is no land to be seen.

•

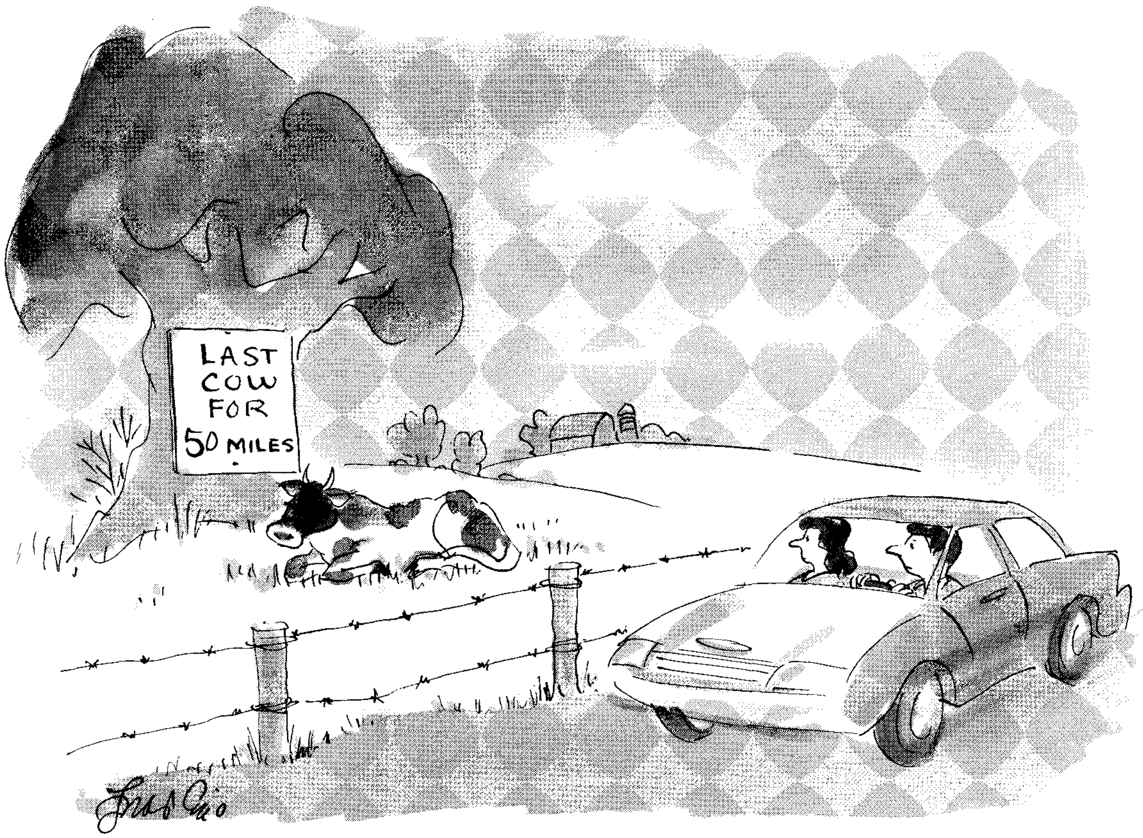
Lunch at the Century with M. "The book," he said, "made quite a ripple." Really very condescending. It is, after all, my first novel. The atmosphere in the streets of a financial and sexual contest is very vivid: I am richer than you, poorer than you, more virile than you, less virile than you, the graduate of a better, more exclusive college than you, and you can tell by the cut of my coat and my hair that my social orientation is better than yours; I work for a smaller but more potent advertising agency than you, my clubs are better than yours, my tailor, my shoemaker, yea, even my lights and my vitals are better than yours. Or lesser. In the public urinal I am solicited by the man on my right but I do not dare turn my head. But I wonder what he looks like. No better or no worse, I guess, than the rest of us in such throes. Whichever way we can most swiftly dismiss these matters seems best. It would matter less (I think) in Rome.

•

What the travel books don't mention is the sense of danger experienced by the visitor to Rome. Driving back into the city after a long weekend you see at the gates of the Campo Verano a long line of hearses. Nearly every hearse and mourner's coach in Rome is there, and while you watch, two more roll up and join the end of the line. There must be twenty-five. You ask one of the drivers what the occasion is and he says it is the epidemic. He has been carrying the dead out of Rome for three days now without time to eat or drink or sleep. He makes the sign of the cross and moves slowly forward to the gates. In the city, in the Piazza Venezia, it is a winter's night with the especial, cheerless dampness of that part of the world. The floodlights aimed at the monument, the yellow clouds of a big-city fog. You park your car and lock the ignition switch, the steering wheel, and all the doors, since car thefts go on every night in this quarter. You go into a bar to buy a package of cigarettes and the place is so damp and cold that the poor girl who waits on you—she wears three sweaters and fur-lined boots—is shivering. You buy an evening paper. In the bar and in the streets everyone is coughing. You ask the porter at our house what he knows of the epidemic and he says that there is one, a *peste*, but through the infinite grace of God his family and his house have been spared. His sister has taken her children out of the city to Capranica to escape the poisonous air but he has no place to send his children. He can only pray. Upstairs in your flat you pour a drink of whiskey for medicinal reasons and step out onto your balcony to examine this dangerous and mysterious city. You telephone a friend and someone answers the phone to say that your friend has left suddenly for Switzerland. You call another friend who has gone to Majorca. Then you call your doctor. He is short-tempered because he has been called from the dinner table to answer the phone. You ask him if the city is dangerous. He shouts his reply. "Yes, the city is dangerous. Rome has always been dangerous. Life is dangerous. Do you expect to live forever?" He ends the conversation with a bang. You look in the newspaper for some account of the plague. There are the usual government crises, new oil fields have been discovered in Sicily, and there was a murder on the Via Cassia, but the only news of the epidemic is that Masses will be sung in six churches for the health of the city of Rome. You might fly, like your friends, to Switzerland or Majorca, but how can you flee until you know what it is you are fleeing?

•

The mystery of a gratifying sense of identity that I don't recall experiencing



ECLIPSE FACSIMILE

It is cheaper than sitting for a portrait:
the Xerox shakes out a picture—

but of what presence?
An iron stove with heat waves tressing it.

This is a face, perhaps.
Or perhaps it has seen *behind* her face.

Had it worked, she'd be urging others to try it, too,
lay a cheek on the windowplate, make a jacket a blind.

Five cents
gets a roller of light and a shudder.

But anyone will show up sooty,
like a mud puddle kicked, or an ancient rubbing.

When she and her partner step out for the sun,
people huddle on every curb.

Each crowd has two sheets of paper
to tip and space.

Over the south sky a tin-colored shadow cuts
and cools mobs gathering around projectionists:

crescents, all from one branding iron,
burn the center of each camp.

She takes her gray portrait from her friend's hand,
stings it with a pin,

and lenses the eclipse down onto his flat, shaded stomach. . . .

As it darkens, everyone is happy,

faces glow. The sun has drawn
the one forbidden place to look

on places closest to us.
As many times as the page will hold holes,

she makes a beam come through to him.
But is that image the sun? Is each one?

Can anyone keep loving it so? When is it rare?
Copies are everywhere.

—Sandra McPherson

• •

in Europe. In an upper-class gathering I suddenly think of myself as a pariah —a small and dirty fraud, a deserved outcast, a spiritual and sexual impostor, a loathsome thing. Then I take a deep breath, stand up straight, and the loathsome image falls away. I am no better and no worse than the other members of the gathering. Indeed, I am myself. It is like a pleasant taste on the tongue.

Perhaps I had less time for self-consciousness abroad.

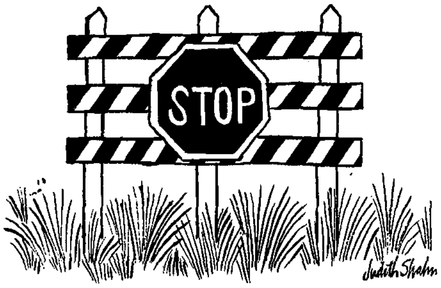
I dream that I travel through the mountains in an express train and make love to a woman I have never seen. And the body is a fool, this flesh and bone is a fool; philandering, complaining, demanding, the gullible dupe of con men and subversive agencies, capricious, cowardly, the essence of inconstancy.

•

Skating on the K.s' pond last night after eating too much ham. Eight-thirty. Many stars. No moon. Orion's sword and girdle brilliant and all the other constellations whose names I have forgotten or never knew. I am reminded of my youth and its skating ponds, of the ardor for strength, courage, and purpose excited in me then by the starlight. It is nearly the same. My feelings may be less ardent, the stars seem to burn more tenderly these days, but my openmouthed delight in finding them hung above the dark ice is no less.

•

Parties on Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday we take a walk. The wind off the river is very cold, but in sheltered places where the sun shines we can smell the earth and leaves and oh, I am very happy with all of this, the valley, my wife, my children, and the sky. And then I think of secrets and mysteries, those forms that lie way below our commonest worries. What is the sexual longing I feel when I step out of a railroad station onto the streets of a city where I am unknown? What sort of tenderness is it that I seem to need so passionately that my common sense is damaged? What is this mysterious need? In a crowded Roman trolley car at closing time on a winter night, someone touches me by chance on the shoulder. I do not turn to see who it is and I will never know if it was a man or a woman, a tart or a priest, but the gentle touch excites in me such longing for a sort of helpful tenderness that I sigh; my knees are weak. This is not a violet-flavored sigh or a Chopinesque longing; it is as coarse and real as the hair on my belly.



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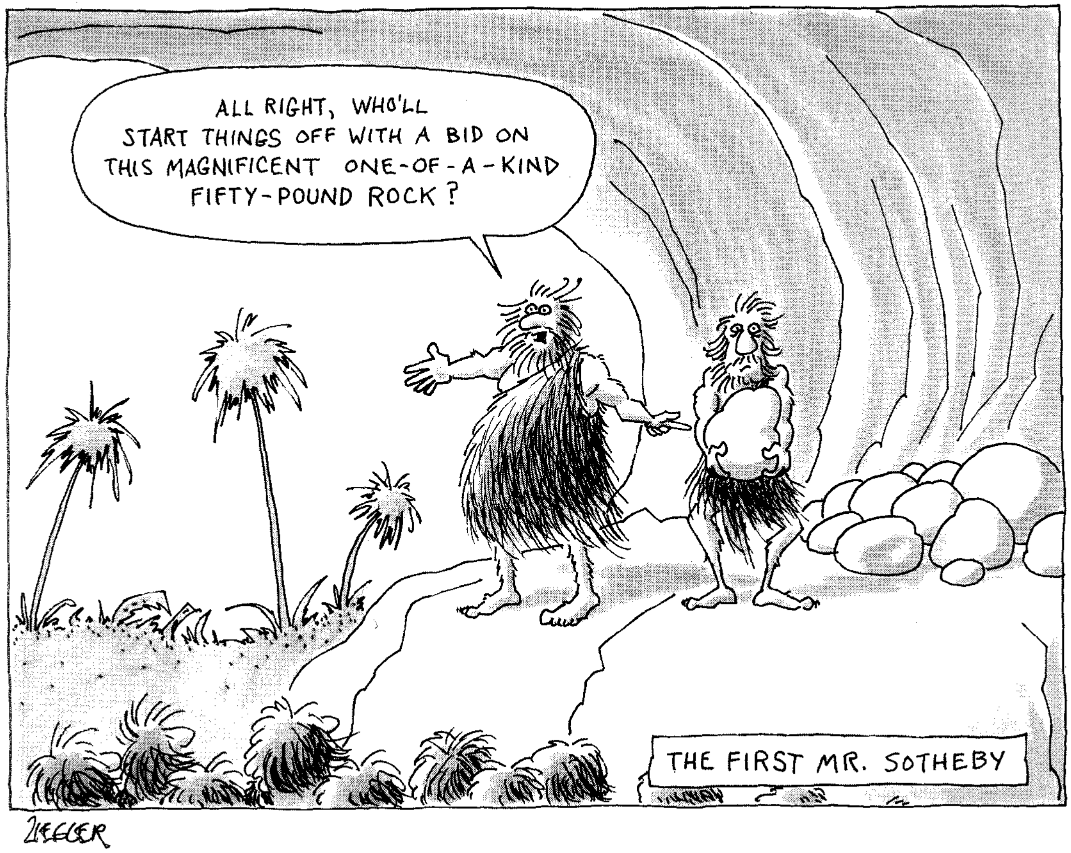
By lewdness I mean just that: raised petticoats in kitchens and back stairs and long afternoons in bed when the sheets smell like the lagoons of Venice; but if my hands tremble with desire they tremble likewise when I reach for the chalice on Sunday, and if lust makes me run and caper it is no stronger a force than that which brings me to my knees to say thanksgivings and litanies. What can this capricious skin be but a blessing?

In the morning I am tired and go into town. The sky is dark. It is raining. I walk around the streets near Times Square and look at the photographs on display of some ballroom hostesses. The first is not young, forty


ALL RIGHT, WHO'LL START THINGS OFF WITH A BID ON THIS MAGNIFICENT ONE-OF-A-KIND FIFTY-POUND ROCK?
ZIEGLER

THE FIRST MR. SOTHEBY

• •

I should say or more, a motherly sort for a lonely sailor. A few loose strands of hair lie along her neck. She wears draperies to display the promise of her voluminous, soft, warm, and un-young front and gives to the camera the smile of a good-natured drudge. Another has marked Italian features, her front tightly corseted—two gleaming globes. Another reminds me of a childhood friend: adventurous, a horsewoman, much married, presently an alcoholic. Here are the same heavy brows, the light hair, the same look of freshness and desperateness. One wears a little gauze, her shoulders bare, and holds her breasts in her hands and she is the most touching of all, for she is bewildered. Since this seems to be what is expected of her, this is what she will do, and the face seems so immature that she cannot be credited with conscious regrets, but bewilderment, yes. She had, in her bones, expected something very different. "Which one you like best?" a man asks me. He carries a piece of pastry and a paper container of coffee.

I answer him cheerfully, but I think the romantic image of the prostitute today, in this country, this rainy morning, is indecent.

•

Feeling poorly. The beating of my heart seems strained. I cough blood. My reflexes are slow. We go unwilling to a P.E.N. party. Driving into New York through a rainy dusk, the clouds in the west colored orange from the discharge of industrial waste; and I think of Rome, the tragedy of her incompetence at coping with the problems of a modern city—smoke and traffic—for who could ever explain to Luigi that he should not burn waste in his stove? At the party I meet M., a young admirer who seems to be his mother's boy, and I think of how creative such a relationship between us might be, but then I think that in this country it is colored with suspicion and anxiety, beginning with my own.

•

And who are all these friends who seem so strange to us? The gamine. The man who puts on smoked glasses to walk through the rain and the dusk. The stiff man aboard ship with the phony English accent and the checked coat. The woman who complains of her husband's impotence at a cocktail party. The man who drinks to refresh his bitterness. The pig. Forget them.

The most wonderful thing about life seems to be that we hardly tap our potential for self-destruction. We may desire it, it may be what we dream of, but we are dissuaded by a beam of light, a change in the wind.

•

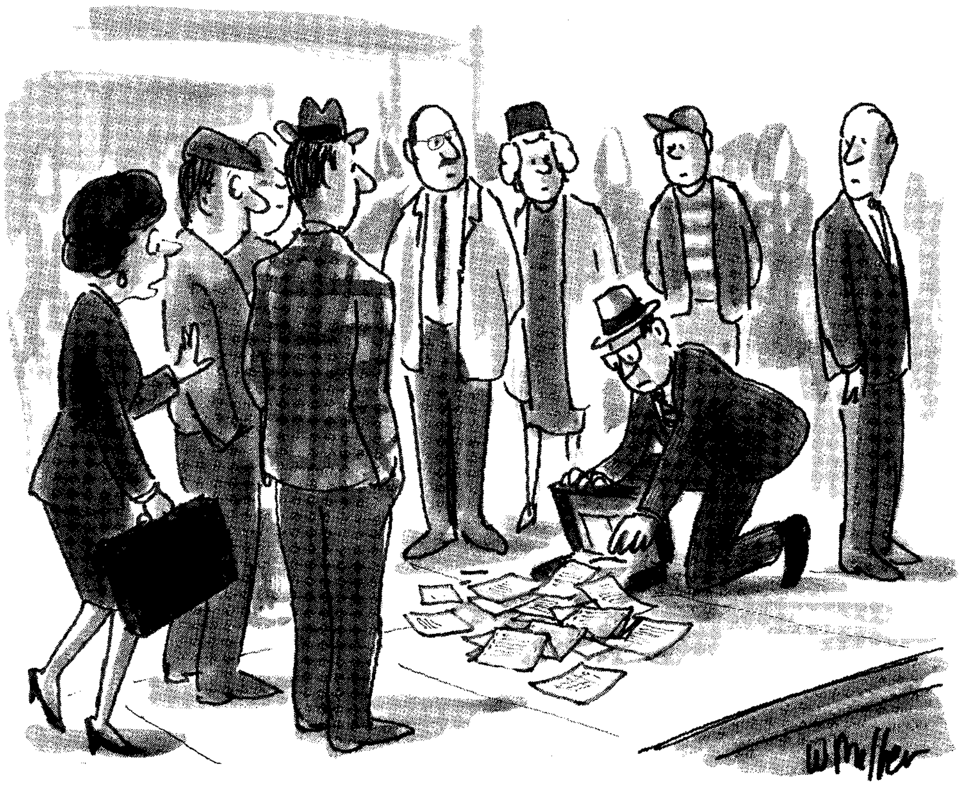
Housework seems trivial, but for what it means. One of my greatest difficulties with women has turned on this. It begins with my grandmother. When she, through some breakdown in service or finance, was obliged to wash the dishes, the men of my family suffered. It was our fault that she, a distinguished, wellborn, and intelligent woman, was bent over a dishpan. If we offered to help, she would wave us away; but we had failed her, not only as providers but as men. The same was true of my mother. When she was obliged to do housework and wash dishes, the sense was always that she had been martyred by the inadequacy, the stupidity of the male sex. Why was this distinguished and intelligent woman suffered to wield a carpet sweeper? It was because her sons and her husband were next to worthless. I used to take the carpet sweeper away from her; I used to wash the dishes; but it never quite repaired the damage. The sense of guilt was always there.

•

We recognize the force of the mystery that keeps us from wrongdoing, but what do we do when this force collapses: when the scale is tipped for evil? The scale is weighted, we know, with blue sky, common sense, and the breathing of our children while they sleep, but why, while we sleep, should it plunge downward?

•

Sitting on the platform of the Institute, I see the famous movie actress in the audience. I give her a big eye and think I may get something in return



"Let me through! I'm a businessperson!"

• •

but perhaps I kid myself. She wears a black dress, her front can be seen, a small gold cross. The feeling, whatever it may be worth, is of devastation. I am smitten. Here, I think, is the face that launched a thousand ships. For this pale hair, boys and grown men with families will run away from home. The crowing of a sweet child, the pleas of a lovely woman, the comforts of the hearth, the endearments of our grown children; nothing will matter. But this is no sloe-eyed, sinuous beauty. I am captivated by what seems to be the perfect sweetness in her face, and this through the long and tiresome citations, the heat, does not change at all. Later I see her on the stairs in a stronger light. The paleness of her hair is a dye and her face is painted. And in the still stronger light of day a little more is lost. But she still seems wonderful: a truly pretty woman.

•

Read "The Deer Park" and tossed it into the fire. Much better than most of what I've been reading, although I think he imitates Saul or I imitate Saul or he imitates me. I have written first-person slang long before "Augie March" appeared and I'm not sure who began it but there has been enough of this carefree fellow. Of the principal character Elena, I know only that she is sloppy and depraved. This is not enough. I don't necessarily hold with my kind of old-fashioned fiction, but if you throw it out you have to pick up something else. The candor does not concern me, but I sometimes wonder where he stands—as a participant or as a voyeur. There is this danger. The climactic writing seems to me not eloquent enough. But he seems to me an estimable man.

•

A hassle. For four or five days such tenderness as I have to offer has been refused. Mary especially *maldisposto* on Saturday. While we are dressing P.B. enters and begins to strum the piano. "Doesn't it sound nice?" Mary says sweetly. It does not. He is the kind of pianist who, should you hear him from the next room, you would swear was playing with his feet. She seems pleased to see him, or perhaps her displeasure with me is lessened. On Sunday I am all love and tenderness but no soap. On Monday I quit this sullen task at three and, having a bellyache, take a Martini, and then my son for a stroll. He seems fair and strong to me: what we mean by life. At dinner I reproach Susie for eating butter with a fork.

"Shut up," says she.

"Leave the table," say I.

She does. Presently I suggest that if she would like to apologize she may come in and eat her strawberries.

"Let's you and I go to the movies," says Mary when she returns. Susie does not deserve to go to the movies because of her incivility to the master. I take my son for another walk. It has cleared at last. It is a summer evening, one of the few we've had this year. The light lies golden on the grass and warm. We walk. He picks weeds and eats them. I speak to him dolefully, as I used to speak to the dog. It seems that I have walked on these paths, this grass, under these trees too often, looking to the color of the sky, a chance star, or a flower for some understanding of my wife's distempers. I have done this so often that it seems now I am tired—my considered choice of word with all its connotations of collapsed vitality. It seems that I must contest, not with the facts of our marriage, our relationship, but with the facts of some incident in her childhood that was enacted years before we met. I think of the rainy afternoon when her father lacerated her with a belt. I think of her early years' having been lived near to his irascibility, his gifts for cruelty, and that she will never be requited with a tranquil life. She needs love, yes, but it seems that she also needs its opposite to feel alive: that her equilibrium depends upon an unusual degree of nastiness. It seems that in all these years of marriage I have been the merest visitor, stopping in after lunch on some rainy day in her childhood, but Mother and Father are expected at five and I will go away. I get angry. I speak passionately to my son, who does not understand a word and only makes sweet sounds of pleasure at the sight of the evening.

I stay away until they have gone to the movie and then, meanly, think of them eating popcorn in the gray light and watching the romantic misfortunes of Marjorie Morningstar. I grow angrier and angrier, and why should my emotions take such a violent turn? Nothing important has happened. I have mustered a sense of humor for much more trying situations. But I cannot control my ill temper, it mounts

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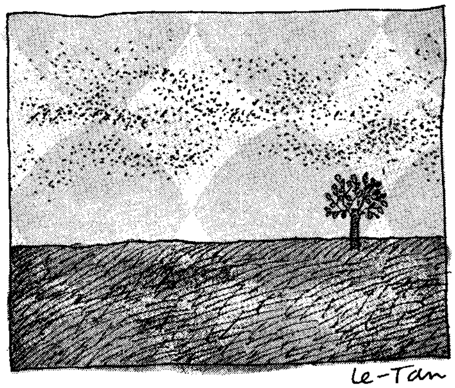
like a fire. The boy goes to bed and I follow him, but my mind still spins around her intractableness, her obtuseness, and my lack of patience. Her approach to the children—I think—is often more wayward and perverse than loving. She showers them with presents, but the kind of loving and intelligent discipline I think they need is, I think, beyond her. I grow so excited that I take a sleeping pill, but as soon as I fall asleep the baby begins to cry. Walking him in the bedroom I think, how meanly, of Mary weeping childish tears over the disappointments of Marjorie Morningstar. I think I will write a rebuttal to the California poets: something in defense of the genteel tradition, something about sitting in a broken rocking chair in a remodelled toolshed where I make my living writing stories about the country-club set. But it seems that I have neither the wit nor the substance to write such a piece, and the idea does not afford me the escape from anger that I sincerely want. When the baby has fallen asleep I take another sleeping pill and just as I am about to fall asleep Mary comes up the stairs. "My God, here she comes!" I exclaim angrily. Then when she says that she enjoyed the movie I say, with shocking nastiness, that she is like the heroine, she is like Marjorie Morningstar. Now my heart is pounding so that I take a third sleeping pill and I am so angry that hateful, physical violence is in my plans. I will strangle her. So I compose myself and go to sleep.

Sitting on the toilet in the morning I am unforgiving: I have had it, I repeat to myself, and get into the garbage pail of a contemplated divorce. I don't want a divorce; I want things to be exactly as they were, there having been much more good than bad in the relationship; I don't want to part with my children and I suspect that I don't want to part with the comforts of my home, a place where I can count on warm meals and company. I am afraid of living in hotel rooms and eating in cafeterias, and this seems to reflect on my courage. I am much too attached to cut flowers, to holding a seashell to my son's ear to see the intent look on his face, to the smell of peonies (oh how brief) in the stairwell. But is it wrong for a man to make a house, a place where he can return in the evening? Is it wrong to avoid the venereal ghosts in cheap hotel rooms and the odd sticks who share your table at the Automat? I don't want to make a life with my bachelor friends or be a dog in the households of the married people I know, bringing a bottle of wine for dinner or a present for the child. I don't want my taste for domestic comforts to involve meanness or fear of the world, although I doubt that I can cope, with the equanimity and calm I cherish, with an empty hotel room. This may all come to nothing. I would like it that way. Angry, I think: I will not drive her to New Hampshire. And at the bottom of this, I suppose, is some mean petulance, some wish to punish her. This is followed by an extensive digression on the subject of her car. I don't want to drive her to New Hampshire if she is in a bad humor is what I seem to mean. But I expect that, for the trip, she will put herself into a charming frame of mind. In any case, I should not think in terms of nasty punishments. I hesitate to justify myself by saying that I have been forced into such a frame of mind, but if I am that susceptible, that easily moved in the wrong direction, that fault is mine.

●

I am a solitary drunkard. I take a little painkiller before lunch but I don't really get to work until late afternoon. At four or half past four or sometimes five I stir up a Martini, thinking that a great many men who can't write as well as I can will already have set themselves down at bar stools. After half a glass of gin I decide that I must get a divorce—and, to tell the truth, Mary is depressed, although my addiction to gin may have something to do with her low spirits. The gin flows freely until supper and so do my memories of the most difficult passages in our marriage; and I think of all the letters I have received from literary ladies implying that my experience with the sex must have been unnaturally difficult and that I deserve better. How right they are, I think. I am deserving of much better. I am sweet and good-humored and I deserve a lovely and an intelligent wife. The fact that my marriage is subject to excessive scrutiny does not occur to me. The fact that other women I know have their intractable passages does not cross my mind. I am deserving. I should have something better. So the gin flows, and after supper the whiskey. I am even a little sly, keeping my glass on the floor where it might not be seen. Mary does not want to speak to me, to be sure. Her looks are dark and impatient. I rustle up a glossary of little jokes to prove the sweetness of my disposition, but she does not laugh. She does not even listen. She does not want to be in the same room with me. She would sooner stand out in the rain. I realize I have gone through this a hundred times before. Not my sources of patience, but my whole point of view seems to have undergone some change. I make another drink and try to read Italian but I am too drunk to make much progress; I doze on the sofa and then go to bed. In the morning I am nauseated. My head aches. A rat has been in the house during the night and eaten the fruit on the table. It is humid and overcast as many of the days have been this year.



●

I drink whiskey before lunch; take Federico for a walk. There is a shower again but hardly enough to darken the walk. It is a terrible day, painful weather. Mary seems to make an effort to end the tension between us and I am very willing. But it comes to nothing over the issue of dishwashing. I am not to wash the dishes; I am to take care of the baby. I think it would be better if I washed the dishes and she took care of the baby. So I take care of the baby and the baby screams and she must leave the dishpan and I say, "We must talk; we must talk. This is unbearable. I have thought of writing you a letter."

"Write me a letter," she says, laughing, and the situation is hopeless. But there is no place where we can talk without being overheard by the children. But I decide then, and later at three in the morning, that I will make three points. (1) She must admit that she is the victim of capricious depressions and do something about this. (2)

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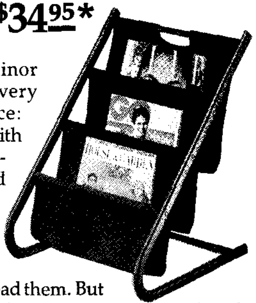

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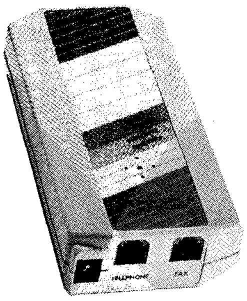

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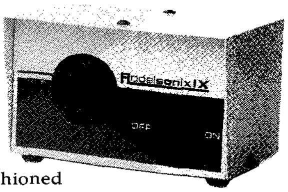

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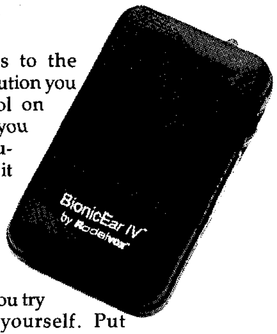

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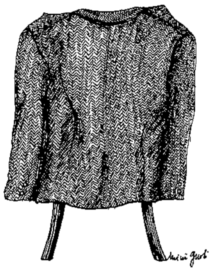
I will not drive her to New Hampshire. It will be good for her to make the trip alone and to spend some time with her father. (3) If she continues to complain about the house and long for other houses she should look for some modest rental where she can live alone with the children. But then at half past three there is a heavy shower of rain; the wind changes its quarter, one needs a blanket, and suddenly I am happy, well-disposed, cheerful. At perhaps the same moment the great rat, the monster, puts his head into the trap and his neck is broken in two. In the fresh light of morning all my resolves have gone like smoke. I will not mention the depressions; I will drive her to New Hampshire; we will look at a farmhouse this afternoon.



Sometimes, in my hankerings, I feel as if I had sold my parts to the devil. How can one imagine such indecencies without such a bargain having been made?

•

We start early on Tuesday for New Hampshire. Since my relations with Mary have not been good, I have thought of her parents with less and less friendliness, less and less love. We are on parkways most of the distance. I do not see much of this country I love. The car overheats and we must stop. I must seem rather tough to my son. The car overheats and we have to keep stopping. I have a muscular pain in my back but I interpret this as an infected kidney that will have to be removed before evening. It is foolish; and it is painful. We stop at the boathouse for a swim. The water is fresh and cold and limpid, but lifeless compared to the sea. There are the mountains, the pines, and I feel for a second the poignancy, the virile poignancy of this place. The wind sound in the pines; this endless noise of passing silk. There is some ease here in this fine air, some suspense of haste. At the stone house we are met by P. and W. He opens at once with a broad attack on *The New Yorker*. She has some gossip about Philadelphia. They talk loudly and at cross-purposes and when her back is turned he makes a face at her and says she is a stupid bitch. We have a drink and then go on to Ben's camp. I am too tired and have drunk too much to feel very strongly or to see very clearly the place where we are leaving him. I love him but he seems not quite ready to love me. Back at the house the loud, cross-purposes conversation continues. He does not answer her most civil questions. He leaves the room in the middle of her remarks; and so we go to bed in a fragrant, homely room where we have been very happy wrapped in the silky sound of the wind passing, streaming through the pines. But I discharge my conjugal responsibilities poorly, and meaning, at dawn, to make amends, I am rebuffed. I dress and go up the hill and make a pot of coffee. It is half past five. The air is very light and fragrant. It smells of flowers and hay. I have never known anywhere, especially not in the Italian hill towns, such a fine air. It is a summer place where a family has come of age. They are not, in my opinion, an especially fragrant family, but at this hour the fragrance of their lives seems to cling to the matchboard, which is fragrant with time. Here are the family photographs, the tastes, a detail from the Sistine Chapel; a picture of Mary and the other children, all of them but Mary bursting their best clothes. The sun has still not risen, and in this still and lovely hour I feel tenderly for all these people whose youth seems centered in these rooms.

•

If we do not imagine the future how can we believe it to exist? I think now that in a year or two the atmosphere will recuperate, the damage will be repaired, and we will walk in the clear light of day again. But I have never been so deeply conscious of chaos, as if we were in the act of falling from some atmospheric and moral orbit, as if the sweet seriousness of life were in great danger.

•

In town, and pleased to have this contest suspended for a day. At 11 A.M. on the corner of Park Avenue and 36th Street a tart gives me the eye. I am alarmed, excited, astonished, etc., as we pass, but when we have passed my mind continues along at her side, climbs the stairs, waits while she turns the key in the lock and performs with copious and revolting detail the whole shabby encounter. This seems to me unclean, unmanly, and I protest, and there you have it, the mind climbing the stairs as the conscience calls it back and both of them powerless to change one another's ways. At the next corner I see a head of light-brown hair and that love of the future that is excited by my children leaps up in me like an illumination and I am refreshed by those sentiments that cool our blood. What fine things I will do for them. What tall things I will build. But the independence with which my imagination pursues the tart seems to reflect on the seriousness of my wish to lead a worthy and a cleanly life.

•

Waiting in the police station to pay a parking ticket, I hear on the radio that a middle-aged man, slight build, five feet seven, brown hair, is wanted for open lewdness. He unzipped his trousers at the corner of Elm Avenue and Chestnut Street and did the same thing twenty minutes later in front of the A. & P. He is driving a yellow convertible but the license number and the make of the car are unknown. A five-state alarm is out; and where can he be? Reading "Tommy Titmouse" to his children. Hiding in a garage, or a movie theatre. Drinking in a bar. I pray for him, among others, in church. It is a rainy Sunday and the smell of pew cushions is dense. One can hardly hear the priest, the noise of rainspouts is so loud. I seem to be back at the farm, a happy child, sitting on burlap cushions and hearing rainspouts. For a second the recollection is so vivid, so full, it is like the rush of memory brought on by a mouthful of hot pudding. I reproach myself. I reproach myself for reproaching myself. I contemplate the quality of introspection in church. I think that faced with the mystery and passion of life we are forced into a position of humility that is best expressed in the attitudes of prayer. I think of the mystery and passion of life. In front of me or behind me is a wayward youth and I brood on his problems. He seems, out of the corner of my eye, thoroughly depraved. I read the Sunday paper.

•

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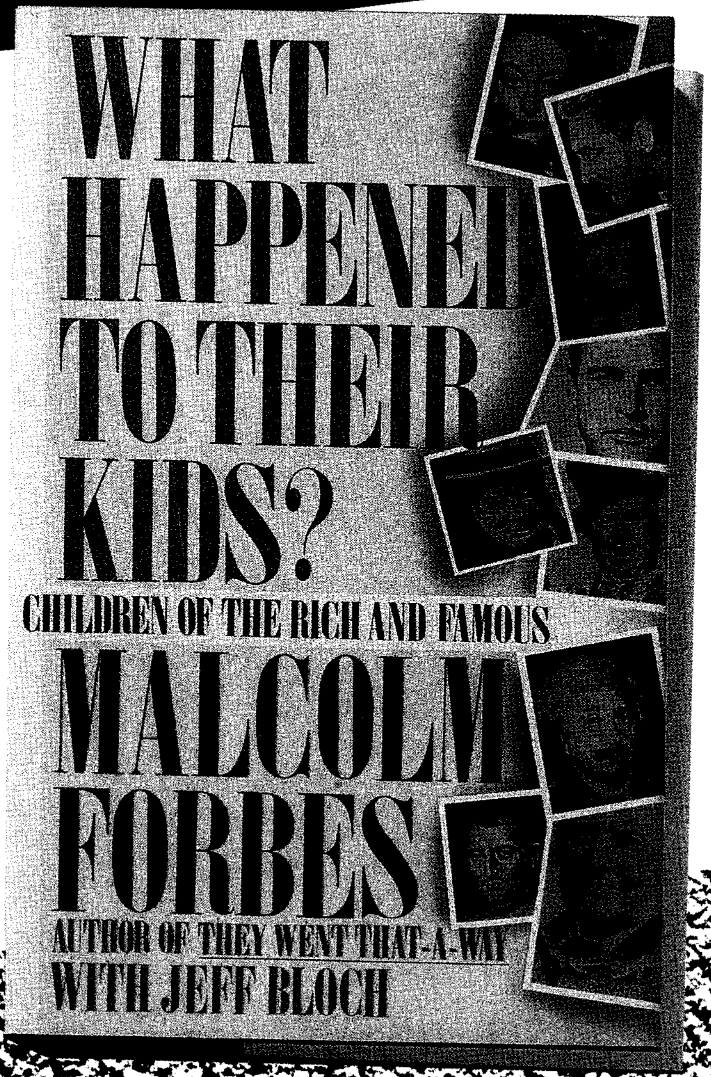

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ing closer to the emotions by both direction and indirection, feeling and intelligence. A pleasant dream, and I feel like myself.

•

But my brother, now, what will become of him? There seems to be no way of appealing to him; he seems to be blundering impatiently toward his grave. And what about the children? S., whose beauty was refined and sweet, has dyed her hair an orangy yellow that makes her features seem sharp. But will he, in his blundering, be able to give her the support she needs?

We cannot cope alone with the devil; we cannot cleanse our hearts and minds by our own devices. When we sin, and I have sinned—I have indulged lewd fancies and read the writing on the public wall—it is not our own flesh and blood that we seem to disfigure or our chances at immortality that we seem to damage, but the whole picture of life, shining or dark as the case may be, seems to have been offended by our lapse.

Heaven may be no more than the tender memories of our friends and lovers; some ghostly reappearance that we make, touching on courage and humor.

My brother, when he got offensively drunk here and when I reproached him later, used to say that he only wanted to educate his neighbors, but he did come into our comfortable house where our attachments are, as a rule, tranquil and affectionate, like a blast, a thunderclap of obscene misery, a man utterly unable to cope with the problems of his life, deaf to every appeal, his mind, his sentiments, and his body ravaged with alcohol, a stupid and impenetrable smile on his face, and in his heart a determination to destroy himself. And I think of the pleasures of our life together when we were young: hockey games on the ice pond, Emerson's Pond, snowball fights, walks on beaches, rides on summer nights in the old roadster, high purpose, high spirits, clowning and love. Now he is so drunk that he cannot walk from the chair to the table and when he gets there he can't eat. He falls into a drunken sleep. He thinks the fault is hers. He wanted to leave at two and play touch football as we used to on Thanksgiving, but she delayed and delayed, she took two hours to dress, she denied him his touch-football game, this simple pleasure, and while he waited he got drunk. The fault is his, we all have to wait, but why in God's name does she lead him into destruction?

•

Waiting in a basement corridor of the Saratoga Hospital to have a chest X-ray I feel very tired and wonder when I will feel well again. It seems now that all my life is false—jerry-built—the structure is of the wrong design and set in the wrong place. What, I think, are the rewards of virtue? Respiratory infections, ulcers, and night sweats? Is it cant to turn from whiskey and debauchery and speak of the holiness, the dignity of life? But there it is, a most solemn and beautiful process. Here are our powers of foolish debasement. I deny myself to be myself.

Either because I am convalescent or hung over or because of the lights in this room, its remoteness and the heat from its radiators, I do not seem to find what I want. What I want is blue sky—some robustness, some escape from this perpetual half fever. Skiing on the lawn I seem to come close to it, some opening of the mind, some way of embracing the world—the lightness, vitality, and movement that the prose I've been writing lacks.

Finish "The Music Teacher" today. Walk into town. The grandiose architecture along Union Avenue. The spectacle of an American small town on a winter's day. Its stratified past, the rise of ground at the railroad crossing, the new bowling alley with a vestibule shaped like a tenpin, the faint flavor of England that hovers over the Episcopal church, dance music pouring out of the supermarket, the very fat dispatcher at the cabstand, her hair dyed and her face painted for some rendezvous, this plaintive, this complex and moving landscape of love and change. The high-school girls, their eyes mascaraed, their voices loud, their ways bold, followed by a pack of crotch-hitching boys.

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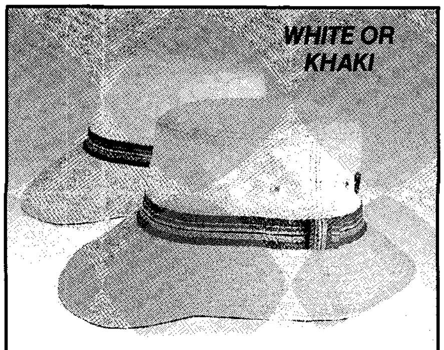
"The Hill Town" finished and off and all right, I guess, although a little intense. On Saturday I feel fine; feel like myself at last. But Mary seems to



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me unhappy. Every surface and angle of life seems to frustrate and irritate her. She swears at the turkey and she swears at the mashed potatoes. I am in high spirits and contented with the children and the better I feel the more conscious am I of her unhappiness. After church I make a crude and foolish remark and there is a shower of tears. And I think that I cannot repair this again, there is nothing that I can do or say. I am not concerned any longer with my own happiness; I am concerned with protecting the children. After lunch we go skating at the B.s'. The ice is nearly a foot thick, black here and there, with stones and branches showing. The sky is a winter sky, a little overcast. The dogs are barking. I go up and down the pond, up and down, chasing a piece of wood with an old hockey stick, and I am very happy. This is my sanctuary, this is my pleasure. The ice rumbles and thunders. The wind sweeps off the little powder we have cut with our skates. It is cold. How I love this: the bare landscape, the color in the willows, the exertion, and the memories of a game. How far I am from the Borghese gardens.

•

I dislike writing here about booze-fighting, but I must do something about it. A friend comes to call. In my anxiety to communicate, to feel the most in warmth and intimacy, I drink too much, which can be two drinks these days. In the morning I am deeply depressed, my insides barely function, my kidney is painful, my hands shake, and walking down Madison Avenue I am in fear of death. But evening comes or even noon and some combination of nervous tensions obscures my memories of what whiskey costs me in the way of physical and intellectual well-being. I could very easily destroy myself. It is ten o'clock now and I am thinking of the noontime snort.

•

A dark day, the trees covered with ice and bent with the weight of ice. "Poor Susie had to walk to the train," says Mary.

"I am very sorry," say I, "I would have driven her had I known."

"*Ha*," says Mary.

"Please don't talk like that," I say. "It isn't necessary." But the damage is done. Gloom is universal. There is, to be said against myself, my fear of impotence; I may not be able to possess her. And there is the chance that she might do or say something that would make possession impossible. I have no taste for brutality. Love for me is love. It seems to me that she is unhappy, that she seeks the cause of this unhappiness in our marriage, and that it lies in some much earlier time of life. But that she cannot, quite understandably, face this.

•

Re my unpleasant remarks this morning, Mary absents herself at lunch with the baby and the dog. There is no note, no explanation. Although the valley is full of fog and the driving is bad, I am not terribly anxious. I drink whiskey and rail loudly to the kitchen walls. The gist of my remarks seems to be petulant. But what is the most reasonable and creative course to take? Things will fester if I don't mention her absence. I will mention it calmly. I have no stomach for a quarrel.

Re the above: I am far from calm. My voice quakes with anger. "Where were you?" No answer. "Where were you and the baby?" She had gone to visit an old dressmaker she once employed in the city who has now married a lawyer and settled in the suburbs: a queer woman, it always seemed to me, bony, shrill, and vulgar, with a Pekinese at her shins. At five I make a series of cocktails and wind an armature with Ben. He is not tremendously interested in electrical motors. What a nice father I am! How wise and patient. How many things I have constructed for him; how many more than most fathers. Mary goes off to sing, the baby goes to sleep in despair, and we three sit down contentedly to read; Ben reads "Tommy Titmouse," Susie reads "The Turn of the Screw," and I read Dante. When Mary returns I am very distant and cool. I read some more—wool-gather, to tell the truth—take a bath, make a curt good night, and sleep. The pump in the basement wakes me at half past three, my kidney aches, and my mouth is dry and sour. I go out to see if the cellar is flooded, but not yet. In the bathroom I smoke a cigarette and my anger at Mary's having lunched with a dressmaker seems trivial and childish. How could I have got myself into such a rage? I am deeply and painfully ashamed. But then I rally in self-defense. I am not vegetative. I am easily upset. Why, then, invent ways of damaging my equilibrium? The pump grinds on and on and by half past seven, when I shave for church (Ash Wednesday), I seem to have com-

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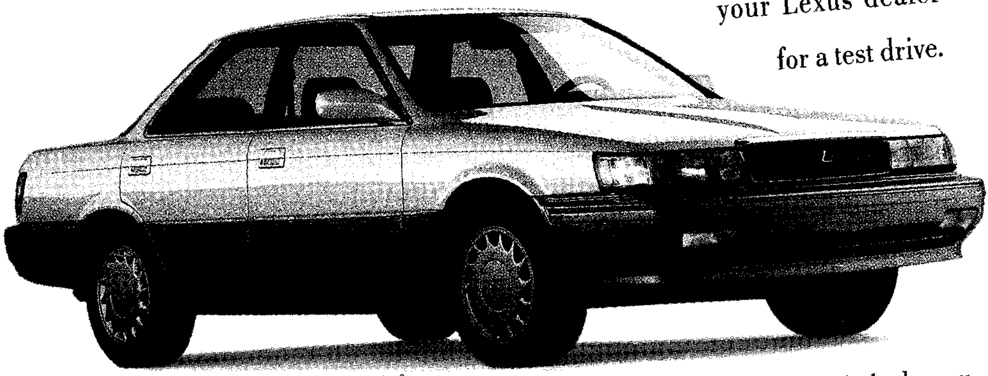

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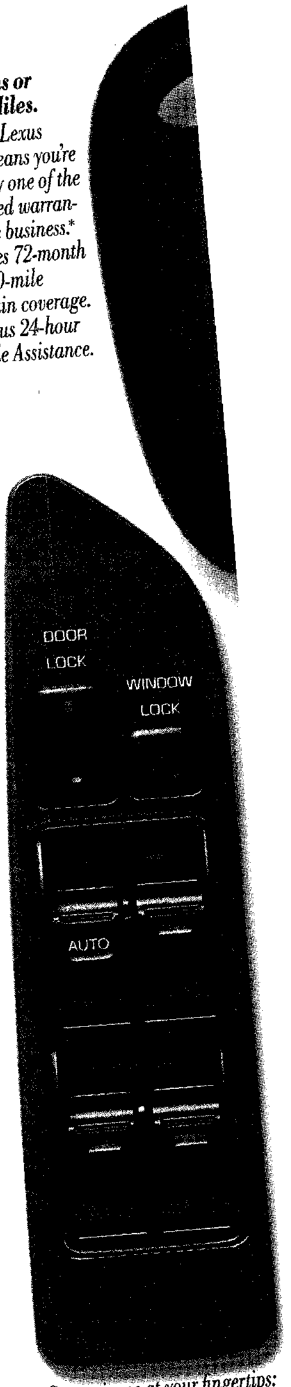

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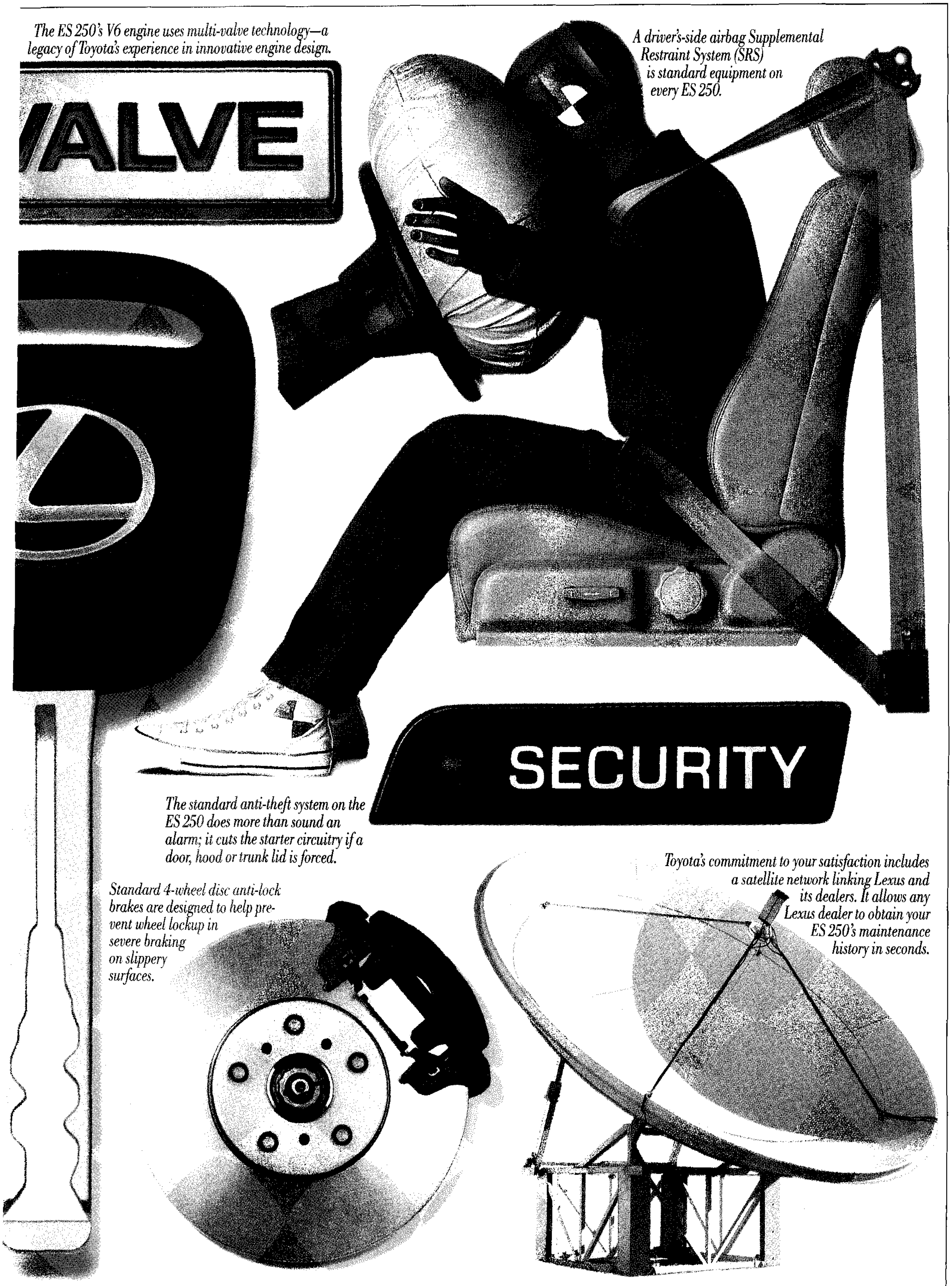

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mitted in the space of eight hours the sins of anger, pride (what a marvellous father!), carnal self-admiration (what a flat stomach!), lustful fancies, and drunken sloth. In church the Epistle is majestic but my mind wanders. Now a clearing wind has sprung out of the northwest. I will think about Hell and the family.

•

For the record: On Valentine's, I give Mary a string of pearls; she gives me a dish. I like china but I would have preferred a suit of underdrawers with hearts on it. I do not claim my pearls; I go to sleep before she comes to bed. I think tonight this fortress is not worth the assault, siege, ladder work, and sometimes broadsword fighting that might be involved. On Saturday we got to the K.s' for drinks before lunch and I was very happy to be out of my own house. I think I will have an affair. Whom will it harm? Everybody from the infant in the cradle to the old gentleman in retirement in Daytona. But my own house seems dark and darkened by distempers and I do not have the strength or will to overtake them. I feel, most painfully, the lack of tenderness. This involves two things: the lack, and my inability to dress it with humor and love. Susie returns late from town and I am pleased to talk with her. This was all I wanted. But I drink too much and in the morning my liver is painful. We go off to lunch at Z.'s, and sitting in this pleasant room with pleasant people I am at a hundred-per-cent loss. I can make the gestures, the noises, I can move from the chair where I drink to the chair at the table, but my mind and my spirit are in chaos. Randy at four, I go to bed alone at half past eight with a scalded liver. And lying in bed I lie in great fear of death: death as chaos; death as a force that exposes all the incompleteness in my work—stories half told or untold; journeys only begun; my sons not yet men.

•

And in my makeup there seems to be some kind of knot, some hard-shell and insoluble element that, as far as I can see, conforms to social usage and custom and contradicts the hankerings and declarations of my flesh. It has, I should say, functioned creatively; has made of my life a web of creative tensions. But today it matters less. Its threats, I know, are hollow. Since I am indebted to this mysterious persuasion, perhaps we can live as friends.

•

To Princeton on the three o'clock. The unrolling of this industrial landscape, powerful and ugly; but this is where they manufacture your vaginal jellies and your shoe trees, your inner tubes and your floor varnish, your girdles and your shingles, and if we demand so much how can we complain about industrial devastation? Princeton seems to me both tranquil and highly expensive. We seem much farther south. The ponds are stained with the streak of red dirt that runs south through Pennsylvania into Georgia. Distant chimes. Well-dressed youth. O'Hara comes to tea and I find him a fine gentleman but I run up against the old feeling that in the end I will turn out not to be varsity. In the final judgment it will be discovered that I eat my peas off a knife and that there is a hole in the seat of my pants. I speak to an audience of not much more than twelve. On the previous evening, three Beat Generation poets, one of them an advocate of buggery, drew a crowd of hundreds. But I am not very well known and may never be. Home again, pleased to see the landscape touched, oh so lightly, with the spring, and then once more the force and hideousness of the industrial stretches and the great marshes with their outcroppings of stone, their broken hoardings, their tall grasses, a last sanctuary for the criminal, the pursued, the last natural hiding place in this part of the world.

•

Easter Eve: dyeing eggs and stuffing the turkey, all pleasant. Easter morning sunny and cool. To church with Susie and Ben. The church for once is full. I am delighted to hear that Christ is risen. I think that it is not against God's will to have my generative powers refreshed by the face of a pretty woman in a forward pew or to wonder about the hairy and somehow limpid young man on my left. It is the combination of hairiness and wistful grace that seems to mark him. When I hear that Mary found at the tomb a man in white raiment I am incredulous. It is hard for me to believe that God expressed His will, His intent in such a specific image. But when I go to the altar I am deeply moved. The chancel is full of lilies and their fragrance seems as fresh as it is heavy; a sign of good cheer. And that this message should have been revealed to us and that we should cherish it seems to be our finest triumph. Here in the chancel we glimpse some vision of transcendent love, some willing triumph over death and all of its lewd guises. And if it is no more than willingness, how wonderful that is in itself. Walk with my youngest son in the sun. How my whole love of life seems to gather around his form; how he fills me with the finest ambitions. Birds sing. There is a little shimmer of heat. The moment of darkness is gone. He throws sticks into the water, which is a perfectly clear, shallow, and rippled scarf of light. He shuffles through the old leaves.

Later we go to the B.s' for the Easter-egg hunt; but I am smitten suddenly with shyness, my smile is strained, my sensibilities are inflamed, I am round-shouldered and bent-necked and dreary and nothing but a pint of bourbon will straighten me out. I count on painkillers until ten, when I retire and, half asleep—courage, lustiness, cleanliness, love, charity, strength, industry, intelligence, vision —I recount to myself a dozen times those virtues I admire.

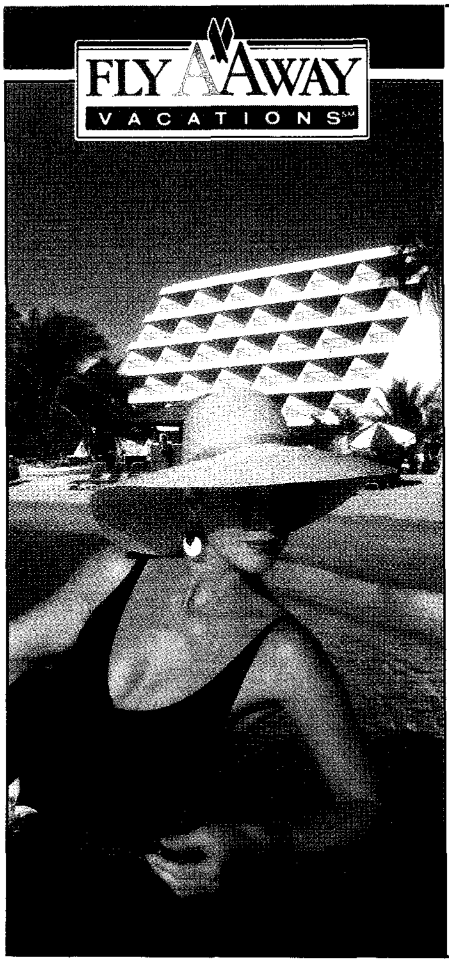
•

B. tells me Fred is suffering from something that happened to him before his adolescence and I think it may have been my birth. I have tried for years to uncover the turning point in his life but this had never occurred to me. This is a clinical or a quasi-scientific disclosure, but it seems to me as rich as any other revelation. I can readily imagine it all. He was happy, high-spirited, and adored, and when, at the age of seven, he was told that he would have to share his universe with a brother, his forebodings would, naturally, have been bitter and deep. They would have been deepened by the outrageous circumstances of my birth. I was conceived mistakenly, after a sales banquet. My mother carried me reluctantly and my father must have been heard to say that he had no love in his heart for another child. These violent scenes must have given great breadth and intensity to his own conflicts. His feeling for me was always violent and ambiguous—hatred and love—and beneath all of this must have been the feeling that I challenged him in some field where he excelled—in the affections of his parents. I have felt for a long time that, with perfect unconsciousness, his urge was to destroy me. I have felt that there was in his drunkenness some terrible cunning.

Here then are three worlds—night, day, and the night within the night. Here are the passions and aspirations of the dead, moving freely among us with malevolence and power. Here is a world of open graves. Here is a world where our imagery breaks down. We have no names, no shapes, no lights, no colors to fill out these powers, and yet they are as persuasive as the living. Out of his window he can see the city shining in the light of day and he adores it but he will be motivated less by this vision than by his remembrance of a scream heard in a dark stairwell fifty years ago. They seem to destroy him and to counsel him to destroy me. We seem to be at one another's throats. We hear the lashing of a dragon's tail in the dead leaves, the piteous screaming of a child whose eyes are plucked out by a witch, we smell the damps of the snake pit. This suggestion or disclosure seems very important to me and I pray it will be as helpful to Fred.

•

After dinner we hear "Tosca," which I think tremendous. I read "Oblomov" in this empty house. The big window stands open. The loud night sounds on the terrace outside make me uneasy. But what can I be doing that would trouble the unquiet dead? I sleep and wake at dawn—partly my bladder, partly the vigorous noise of nest-building going on among the birds. They can be heard dragging sticks over the tin gutters. They are all singing loudly. Then up springs my capricious muscle, all ready for fun. Downstairs I hear my friend coughing and flushing his toilet. I think about trout water but I resent this forced cheerfulness: I wade down the stream, pool after pool, catch a big trout, and use my hat as a landing net. My muscle



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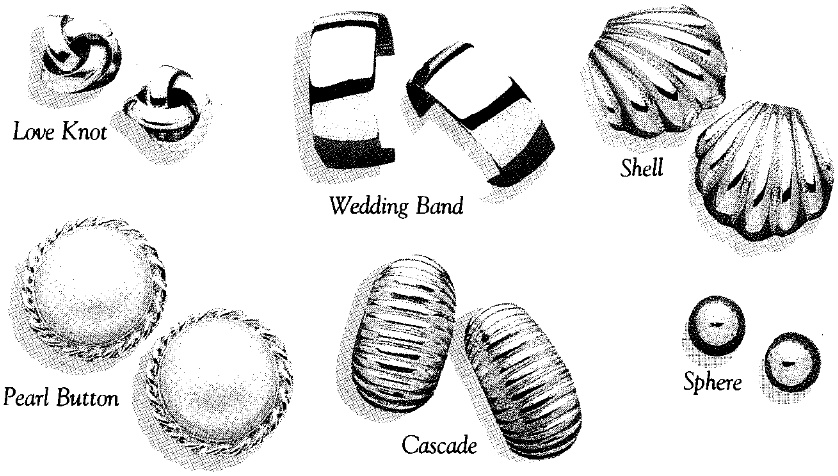

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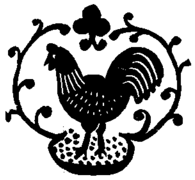
keeps up its nagging and complaining and I do not want love or beauty or lewdness, I only want to get back to sleep. I fall asleep at last and have a sweet dream in which I crash a cocktail party at J. P. Marquand's. I am well liked and passed gracefully from guest to guest. Toward the end P. appears to be with me and when we speak Italian several guests speak Italian with us. At the end my brother appears, drunken, apologetic, and intractable. He comes to spoil the party, not because he wants to, but because he is driven by unreasoning forces. When he was a boy, and after my birth, there was a party in the neighborhood. He was not invited and he went to the house and threw a stone through the window. Now he is reliving this incident in our lives and in my dreams. I wake feeling rested and happy.

•

I must think of alcoholism as a progressive disease. It has been for a week or longer that I have, on almost every day, drunk too much. There is also the question of my being denied my desires. This has also been a matter of a week. Even before dinner is put onto the table, I am discouraged. "As soon as the dishes are washed," says Mary, "I am going upstairs and going to sleep." This may not be conscious but I think it is intentional. One thing or another. Last night such an array of metal rollers, curlers, and pins that it was discouraging. I awake with a thorn in my groin and think sentimentally of prostitution. Why should the whores be persecuted, arrested, and thrown into jail when all they mean to do is to lead us out of the dilemma, to let us live peacefully with ourselves? And I think of a man who has been denied for six weeks, who is in an agony of desire, who is driven. Where can he turn, where can he go?



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I take Ben and his friends down to the river fishing. Spiders and bumblebees among the rocks on the embankment. The potency of this place, this milieu. Cinders, beer cans, the rusty siding, a freight train pulling a hundred cars disappearing around the bend, an old man emptying his bladder for the third time in an hour, boys throwing rocks, tough angler in a rowboat—he picks on little kids and makes jokes during catechism—the slow smiles of the Saturday passengers in a train as we wave. A dead-end place but a very peaceful one. It is very peaceful to sit here drinking beer, although I am afraid that the boys will fall off the railroad bridge into the cove. What I am afraid of, it seems, is that I will have to dive in after them. I am a coward.

•

Walk in the garden with Federico. He is full of beans. My love muscle is restive. Federico admires the granite lion and the marble dog, he stuffs the faucets with gravel and is not obedient. It will rain. I pick him up in my arms and he falls into a deep sleep. "Oh, I love you," I say as I carry him. "You are my best; you and the singing of the cardinal birds dissuade me from lust and anger." I go with Ben to the doctor and he slips his finger up his rump and knocks his b--ls together. What a strange life this must be—this seascape of rumps. There is on his face and in his manner the trace of a terrible loneliness. Mary watches a flock of yellow finches in the garden. There must be fifty. I embrace her and hope to declare my intentions for the evening but in the kitchen there is some unpleasantness. I am oversensitive but what can be done? Anyhow, my desires persist. I help Susie with her homework and go upstairs early but it is already too late. The lights are off. Her eyes are shut and there is so much hardware protruding from her brow that an embrace might be dangerous. You could put out your eye.

All my kind feelings have been turned into bitterness and anger. I sit on the edge of the bathtub smoking and I resent being forced into this position but if I should earnestly try to explain it I might be answered with peals of callous laughter. I am very angry and I think I have some insight into the bewildering passions of a murderer. And I think that a perverse woman can sometimes, as with my brother, destroy a man. She denies with ridicule his deepest means of self-expression, his whole power of love. He should take a mistress but where will he find one? His secretary is too skinny and has bad breath. It would be indecent to attack the maid. A is too fat and B is too short and C is too passionate and D is not passionate enough and so forth and so on. Oh, she has excellence and kindness, I know, but I do not feel like going on my knees to ask her favors. This morning I feel sad and tired although I hope for the best. She is standing at the window watching the yellow finches in the garden. There are fifty—very shy—and at each movement or voice from the house they fly up into the trees, the hemlocks. Then when it is quiet they come down—yellow, and like a fall of leaves on a cold wind.

I go into town and decide to lunch with a pretty girl, but when I look up her number in the telephone book my eyes have grown too weak for me to read the pages. I must, to the amazement of a man behind me, strike a match and hold it close to the book to find the number. We will meet and so I walk on the streets for an hour, up past, by chance, the house—the windows—where Mary and I first became lovers. A fine day, and the weather has brought more beauties, more freaks, more everything out onto the sidewalk. It is a spectacle. It is spring and I am happy and will meet a pretty girl at a bar. The bar is dark and full of advertising men. They all seem to drink here regularly; they talk about what happened last night and the night before. R. comes in, very pretty, we lunch and I leave her at her door. I feel better, I am not depressed; there are plenty of pretty women in the world and I am not unattractive. I am cool to Mary. Why should I worry about her intractableness? We go to a concert—three quartets: Mozart, Debussy, and Beethoven—and it is the music that persuades me that I should try to understand Mary, that my emotional responsibilities lie here. This seems to be the purport of all the melodies. Later, when we are together in the bathroom, my desires seem maniacal. "I had lunch at the Nautilus," she said, "and it was expensive and awful. First I had a floury cup of clam chowder and some old salad, some leftover salad. Then mackerel, very greasy and not fresh. I can still taste it. And some awful broccoli. . . ." Oh please, please, I groan, please hurry. There is some difference of opinion here.

•

Wake at six to a day of such beauty that it seems as if this corner of the planet was all one bloom, all opening and burgeoning, and there is more here than we can say: prismatic lights, prismatic smells, something that sets one's teeth on edge with pleasure. The morning light is gold as money and pours in the eastern windows. But it is the shadow that is exciting, the light that cannot be defined, the maple tree, its leaves not yet formed, that is astounding in its beauty and its succulence and that is not itself but one of a million trees, a link in a long chain of experience beginning in childhood.

Rogation Sunday. There are two known worlds, the visible and the invisible, and this drop of wine and crust is the link between the two. I seem to see the chain of being, reaching from beneath the earth up into the sky. And I think of the prayers that rise up into the chancel: Shall I sell my beer stock? Shall I stay away from Mrs. Piggott? Shall I enter Ralph in Princeton? Shall I turn in the station wagon? But among them some of worth, some of the deepest yearning.

•

The lower school here burns down. A rambling frame building with turrets and amendments, saturated in creosote, it seems to explode in flame. Ten minutes after the old teacher smells smoke, it is a pillar of fire. The firemen can't approach it, the heat is so intense. All the surrounding trees can be seen to wither. Here is the savage power of fire, the smiting force, which, like so much else in life, evades precautions and is ruthless. Within half an hour everything is gone, the clothing, the children's toys, the souvenirs of travel and athletic prowess, the rich precipitate of their lives. At three o'clock they possessed an environment. At three-twenty they are naked and dependent upon charity. The bitter smoke.

•

Year after year I read in here that I am drinking too much, and there can be no doubt of the fact that this is progressive. I waste more days, I suffer deeper pangs of guilt, I wake up at three in the morning with the feelings of a temperance worker. Drink, its implements, environments, and effects all seem disgusting. And yet each noon I reach for the whiskey bottle. I don't seem able to drink temperately and yet I don't seem able to stop.

•

My forty-seventh birthday and I feel neither young nor old, sprightly in the middle, and pray that I will have done a decent book by the forty-eighth. Shaving, and trying to come to terms with myself, I think that I am a small man, small feet, small p---k, small hands, small waist, and that these are the facts. I must confine my attentions to little, little women, sit in tiny chairs, etc. And then I think of how I hate small men, those whose incurable youth is on them like a stain. How I hate small feet, small hands, small-waisted males who stand behind their small wives at cocktail parties in a realm of timid smallness.

•

I would like a more muscular vocabulary. And I must be careful about my cultivated accent. When this gets into my prose, my prose is at its worst.

•

A four-round booze fight, beginning when I take Susie into town and get a

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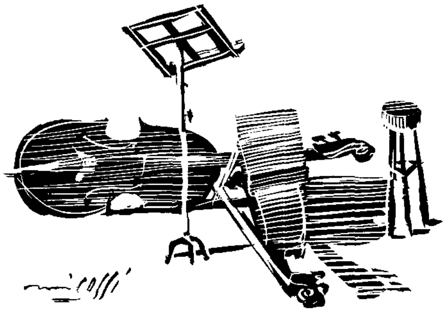
nervous stomach ache in Ardsley. There is the usual psychological turmoil and I drink two Martinis before lunch and feel very playful. I seem entitled to these drinks. As the afternoon wanes the turmoil waxes, and when I get home I think I deserve a few cocktails. I know that in the morning I will have to take care of Federico—I can't work—and with this as an excuse I drink after dinner. In the morning I feel sick, disgusted with myself, despairing and obscene. I have a drink to pull myself together at half past eleven and begin my serious drinking at half past four, when I also begin the cooking. I have my excuses. My prudence has been destroyed and when I've finished with the dishes I take a tonic dose of nut-brown whiskey. On Saturday I feel even worse. I have a drink before lunch. This seems to leave me with a sick headache, nausea. After dinner we have to pay a call on La Tata; this is a mandatory courtesy, and S. keeps filling my glass with Scotch. On Sunday I feel the worst. I take Federico for a walk. At a quarter after eleven I write an attack on the evils of drink. Then I look up the telephone number of Alcoholics Anonymous. Then, my hands shaking, I open the bar and drink the left-over whiskey, gin, and vermouth, whatever I can lay my shaking hands on. Now the bout is over and I am myself again, but I wish I could be done with this.

At the station, Federico and I wave to the trains. The engineers wave to us, sometimes the conductors and the passengers raise their hands. Down the river in the morning light comes the train from Chicago. The windowsills of the coaches are lined with paper coffee cups. The first-class passengers sit alone in their roomettes, and how much alone one can be in these places. The dining car is closed. The waiters have stripped off the tablecloths and dressed in their street clothing. Everything is in readiness, although it will be an hour before they reach New York. The ladies have on their hats, they hold their gloves and bags. And in this delay, this dogwatch, this point of readiness we wish them, my son and I, Godspeed and a pleasant arrival. We hope that they will be met at the station by their friends or their family or that they will go to some place where they will be greeted with affection, trust, and sometimes love. We hope they will not end up in a hotel room.

•

I stopped smoking Saturday because it seemed to give me painful indigestion. But at a party on Saturday night I must have smoked a package of cigarettes. I smoked three cigarettes before noon on Sunday and one in the afternoon. I smoked two or three on Monday. On Tuesday I smoked one. Today, Wednesday, I have smoked none and it is a quarter to ten. My chest promises to clear up and it is a pleasure not to have a bronchial wheeze like a rusty gate. I cough in the morning but I cough without a sense of guilt. However, the withdrawal from nicotine leaves me quite dizzy, and we have to drive tonight to Sherman. It might be dangerous. And yet having come this little way I hate to return to a world where I am dependent upon cigarettes and, when travelling, upon cigarettes made, it seems, of twine and dead leaves. We will come back to this. My head is not where it belongs.

I read "Where Angels Fear to Tread." When he writes of the love of beauty and the love of truth he writes with purity and eloquence and we seem to be in a place of some elevation; but in fact we are watching two spinsters and one unfledged male steal a child and cause his death. The death of this child seems to be idle and repulsive and I think that in fiction, much as in life, we may not, without good reason, slaughter the innocent, persecute the defenseless and the infirm, or speak with idle malice. He has grace, sometimes elegance, and I think of the charge of vulgarity made against my prose. If it is vulgar, and it may be, it is an honest vulgarity, an incurable or congenital vulgarity, a vulgarity that lies close to my heart. But when he speaks of the invincibility of society I envy his lucidness; again, when he describes the vision, I can't recall how, of the nature of our transactions here as a trial of what it is men might accomplish. I catch him turning an epigram on the Sacraments, that is, that they are not the facts that they are not meant to be.



I do not make much sense without tobacco.

•

Fred calls to say that he would like to discuss some business with me and I invite my brother to lunch. I have suspected that he was drinking again; but he was not today. Heavy-faced. A little alcoholic lameness. He gets up unreadily from his chair and flinches getting into his car. However, his constitution seems unusually strong and durable and I am happy to share this with him. After lunch I drive him to the station with my younger son and we park there waiting (1) for him to explain his visit; (2) for a train to pass, to the delight of my son. Finally a train passes and this much is accomplished. Fred talks on about his trip across the country in August and finally I ask him, as gently as possible, what is on his mind. "Nothing," he says, "nothing," but as I press him a little I find that he plans to open a men's-clothing store in either San Juan, Puerto Rico, or Palo Alto, California. He is going down to San Juan to look things over. He is also thinking of a little excursion to Nantucket. I ask if he would like some money. No, this will not be necessary; but we drive back to the house and I write him a check for five hundred dollars. He puts this in his pocket and leaves. I am not genuinely petulant—I have to work at the feeling—and Mary is not at all shrewish. The facts are only these: that to continue to make such contributions I must find ways of making more money. At least he does not suffer today from the illusion of being cunning. Mary points out that his wife will not work although she could very easily, and that he is unrealistic about looking for work; that he looks for nothing but the kind of job that will never come his way; but I sympathize with him here. I could not get a job as a haberdasher's clerk myself. I might get a job in the liquor store, and I could work as a gardener, but pride and status are nearly insuperable obstacles. "Neither of you will ever let a woman work," Mary says, and here we have a change of scenery, a change of atmosphere. This is a sore point. When my mother went to work she abdicated all of her responsibilities as a woman. Our house was cold. I was the cook, dishwasher, and cleaning woman. My father was wretched. I defend myself, confusedly, but I have no objections to a woman's working as long as she remains my wife, as long as there is no exchange of roles. And I come back to the bad feeling of a triangular relationship: that in my delight in erotic love I leave myself without a position of retreat.

I think the atmosphere has changed but the fault may be mine, there seems to be some canalization in my feeling, some inclination to seem grief-stricken, a lack of vigor. Mary talks with her sister on the phone for an hour and there is a change in her voice, her accent. She talks with her other sister for half an hour and there is still another change. We all, to some degree, continuously play out the roles of the long-since discontinued dramas of our childhood—and in myself I sometimes hear a change of accent in the company of my brother. Then she sends a cable to B. and here we have still another change. We talk about the administration of the summer place. "You don't have to worry about this," Mary says. The remark is simple enough but I think it is spoken meanly and I multiply the possibilities of bad feeling by asking sarcastically to be forgiven for my presumption. We kiss good night and sleep but I am angry and feel unclean, almost scabrous. The boy wakes and I take him into our bed and it is his power to remind me of the freshness and the cleanliness of love: to deliver me.

•

That was the year everybody in the United States was worried about homosexuality. They were worried about other things, too, but their other anxieties were published, discussed, and ventilated while their anxieties about homosexuality remained in the dark: remained unspoken. Is he? Was he? Did they? Am I? Could I? seemed to be at the back of everyone's mind. A great emphasis, by way of defense, was put upon manliness, athletics, hunting, fishing, and conservative clothing, but the lonely wife wondered, glancingly, about her husband at his hunting camp, and the husband himself wondered with whom he shared a rude bed of pines. Was he? Did he? Had he? Did he want to? Had he ever? But what I really mean to say is that this is laughable. Guilty man may be, but only an absurdly repressed people would behave this way.

•

I think very vaguely of The Death Of The Short Story; the year the squirrels came in; some projection of my feelings about returning to this country. I read two stories of mine and find them too breezy. They were deeply felt at the time but there seems to be a lack of deep notes; no bass clef; a lack of fundamentals. Why should some of these lines, drawn from the deepest pain and pleasure I have known, seem to be glossy and so little else? Haste, maybe. I think of Coverly as Apollo and Moses as Dionysus. And looking around for some general, some fundamental axe to grind, what do I come up with? The fundamental competitiveness of brothers. And of this society: it is not so astonishing that we should find violence here, but is it not nearly impossible to relate it to the niceness—the religion of niceness with its sacra-

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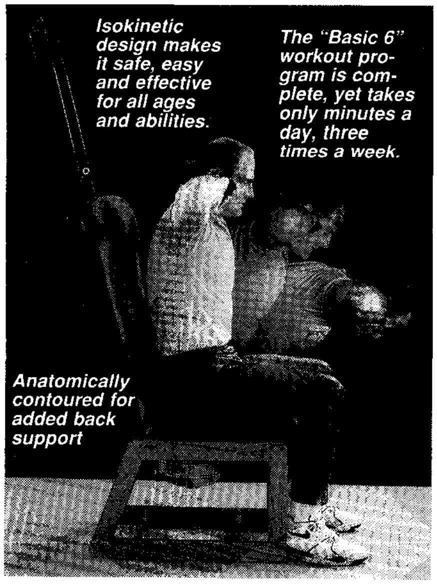
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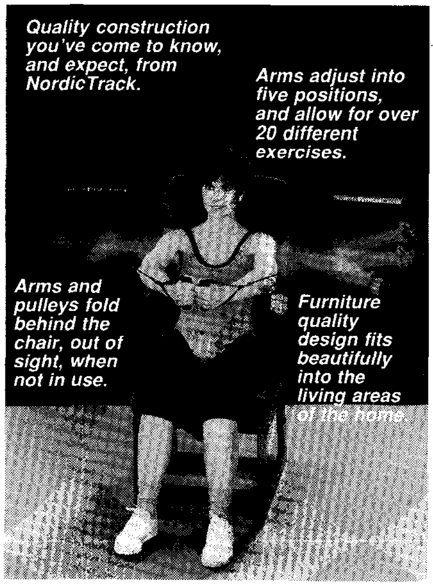
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ments, its jealousies, and its demanding faithfulness that seems to be the religion of this province?

What is the meaning, though, of this sudden, this random tenderness that we feel for the woman in worsted stockings and the young banker from the Congo? What stirs in us? Is it the chance that we may be perfectly understood? Is it the thought of some peaceable kingdom where men and women love one another freely and without guilt? Or is it a promise of the conquest of death?

◆

If I am writing narrative prose, and I sometimes am, I must content myself with these limitations. Every line cannot be a cry from the heart, cut in stone. But I do rebel against common speech, against the quality of filler I find in my work, and I try to escape in Leander's journal, the boy's story, the chambermaid and the latrine. But since I was not born with a strong accent I will have to get along on what I have.

◆

Half asleep, I think or dream of fields that, when I was young, were fertile but that are neglected, forgotten now. How sad. And I think that we, who, when we were young, demanded brave and explicit counsel, find ourselves, in the middle of life, unable to answer any of the questions our children ask. I can't seem to get the drunk's voice off the page, to make him speak with color. You entered life with absolutely nothing and you'll go out with absolutely nothing. A bigoted and anesthetized world. But what I don't seem able to do is to pull up the vision: the feeling of what life can be without uncommon bigotry, censure, and repression. And I don't seem able to get the triangle, the balance between the niceties, the stress on the appearance of things, the natural violence that lies beneath all of this, and the vision of a world where the balance is more commodious; where the sense of tragedy is not lost in anesthesia.

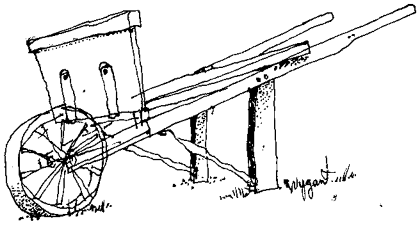
◆

The deadline seems to be an artificial one that I have set up myself to impress myself. It may be childish, but it's kept me occupied. I think of Joyce, choosing here and there a word with such brilliance that it floats through my mind all day and is hanging there when I wake. I have my way in bed and seem returned, as I take her in my arms, to some fine summer night. We cling to one another's lips as if we were inhaling the warm dark, the warmest, darkest air. My son didn't dream of the werewolf.

"Of course," Mary says, "it's only natural for a woman to be unfaithful to her husband." This re the man who delivers dry cleaning. "Youse are very charming" is a sample of his style. Standing on the threshold, he says, "I didn't pick up on Saturday because I've been having this trouble. It seems I couldn't do nothing right. My wife went off with this police lieutenant, the one who directs traffic at the corner of Main and Broadway. Here's a picture of her. Pretty, isn't she? When we got married, everybody said it was a perfect match. She run off leaving me with the four little kids to take care of and the job and all. Now she's come back but she don't sleep with me. She says she's saving herself for him. She still thinks she's in love with him. But he, he don't care about her anymore. He don't ever want to see her again. They told me this at the police station. Next week we're going to see the monsignor and talk it over with him and the Department of Welfare; they're going to get a psychiatrist for her. She needs help and I'm going to help her. I'm going to be very kind and strong. I'll bring the rugs back on Saturday."

◆

We run out of liquor as I had planned, at noon. At three I study the bar with its empty bottles. At four I drink four cups of tea with sugar. At five I stuff myself with bread and cheese and play backgammon. At six, when Mary returns, I drink the last of the liquor in the house, two fingers of cooking rum. This does not make much difference and I begin to feel the symptoms of withdrawal. I shout at Federico. Drying the dishes I think of my dead mother, lying in her grave; and death appears to me to be a force of loneliness, only hinted at by the most ravening loneliness we know in life; the soul does not leave the body but lingers with it through every stage of decomposition and neglect, through heat and cold and the long nights. Another symptom of withdrawal is anxiety. The oil burner will explode. Thieves will come in and harm my children, etc. This morning (9 A.M.) I have also given up smoking. Walking down to the station I am pleased to fill my chest with the cold morning air. I seem to feel it refresh my blood. How much better this is for me than smoke. But in the last half hour I have begun to feel the absence of a habitual stimulus. I feel sleepy—horny in a disgusting way—my eyes are sore and my sense of things is faded and dim. Here is the letdown, the distortion.



Gino the barber looks out of the Saturday paper, gracefully brandishing his hairy forearms. In his middle twenties, I guess, and from south of Naples, he seems to be the archetypal Italian boy. His skin is a fine olive color, very fine, and drawn over a well-shaped, egg-shaped skull. His curls are black and well groomed. His eyes are large and full of appeal and he touches one on the shoulder, the knee, the arm and hand; his whole manner is of a continuous and fairly gay sexual flirtation, but if he were pressed I think he would claim to be innocent, and I think he is. His innocence is part of his democratization. In the New World one isn't rolled for three hundred lire; one is monogamous, one is innocent, one is pure. I think he is comical and charming but I also think that, having contented oneself with such an explanation, he might find that Gino was the destroyer of his way of life.

I dream of the photograph of a woman kneeling in a field and holding two yellow roses. The sense of the picture is that she is tributary to the roses; that the picture was taken for some rosarian who was proud of his yellow blooms. It seems to be in the past because her summer, cotton dress has long sleeves, a long skirt, and a high bodice, although this does nothing to conceal the fullness of her bosom. She is kneeling in a field of straw and holding the two roses over one knee. Her face is oval, very fresh in color, and her hair is the lightest brown. I don't mean blond; I mean a refinement of goldenness, of brownness that has no relation to a blonde or a towhead. Her hair is long. This and her skirts convince me that the picture is an old one. Her hair is drawn softly back from her face and fixed in a bun at the back of her neck.

Stew around and make a half-arsed attempt to stop smoking. Write some letters. Break down at ten past ten and cross the railroad bridge to the cig machine. Read some Mailer and decide that his prose has a better tone than mine. Acute discontent. Knock off at a quarter to four. A cold winter afternoon. Drive the cleaning woman home with Federico. Stop at the liquor store, where he gets a lollipop and I get gin and whiskey. Driving back home, past the prison and down by the river, the sky is gold, so gold that my cupidity is aroused. It is like the gold standard, the source of the legends of gold. An inscrutable wall of light. Back home I knock out some ice cubes, give the local paper a shake, and stand by the glass panes of the storm door thinking of the lover's sense of crises, the lover's fine sense of crises, the lover's sense of the hour of day, the lover's fine sense of hearing. Some part of the sentence seems to stand, and standing at the door I seem to find myself for five minutes: straight, spare, clearheaded, neither young nor old, and not much concerned with age, not concerned at all. What has been the matter: too much gin, too much smoke, too much crap of all kinds. So I make a drink and light a cigarette.

•

Touch and go with the booze, and I must have been disagreeable. At the table I accuse Mary of being negative. I do this freely and unfairly, since one by one the members of her family have taken me aside and asked if I didn't find her impossible. This is no way to behave. And I can't remember how the night ended. I read Nabokov, who is florid and who now and then makes a mistake and puts me at ease: brings me down from the ideal of "the lover's fine sense of crises," from my ideal of a prose that carries its vitality like a scraped wire. Something in between. But nearly every time I think of a story I see it set up in the magazine opposite a cartoon; and I must realize that the people who read my fiction have stopped reading *The New Yorker;* I must realize that the breach here is real and happy. I have spent the last three months trying to write three stories, wanting money, really: wanting to prove to myself that I can. I think I've wasted some time but I don't think all of it is wasted.

•

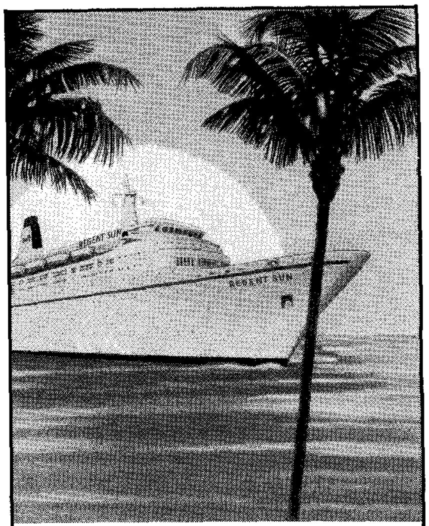
My sense of morality is that life is a creative process and that anything that chafes or impedes this forward thrust is evil and obscene. The simplest arrangements—trees, a line of bathhouses, a church steeple, a bench in a park—appear to have a moral significance, a continuity that is heartening and that corresponds to my whole sense of being. But there are speculations and desires that seem contrary to the admirable drift of the clouds in heaven, and perhaps the deepest sadness that I know is to be absorbed in these.

•

Mary sings at a Methodist church, a little, frame, brown-stained, self-respecting barn of a place that must have been a country church when it was raised but that is now crowded out by a firehouse, grocery store, apartment building, etc. We are early, and as we wait the old women of the neighborhood appear, some of them with sticks and crutches. Many of them wear Christmas-tree ornaments on their coats. They wear feathers and beads and are painted like savages. I notice the talismanic significance of mink. These are poor people and cannot afford pelts but every woman there sports a piece of mink as the women of Rome wear a talisman against the evil eye. One has a mink hat, another has mink buttons on her coat, another has a cloth coat woven to look like mink, another has a muskrat coat dyed like mink, even little children have mink cuffs, some scrap of the magical fur.

•

We drink champagne and have a fine supper. "Oh, I'm so happy," Mary says, stepping into my arms, and it seems to me that I can feel the happiness of other people in the houses around us. I think that everyone is happy tonight. Susie and I go to church and I am very happy at this, for, whatever my doubts are, this gospel of the Prince of Peace, born in a stable, expresses my deepest feelings about life. Two meddlesome vestrymen regulate Communion. Some strays, who have



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wandered in to hear the carols, are mystified by the liturgy. Across the aisle I see the face of a boy home from college: the son of a friend and neighbor. He has a sharp nose, his hair is a little long, and he reminds me of H., and it seems to me that in this relationship I may have been sinful, a force of corruption; but there is a great difference between these two faces. In this one there is authority, skepticism—the color is high and fresh—and he looks out at the world with a fitting tolerance and humor for this time of life. Another boy, home from college, comes into my pew and we share a hymnal and there is something so pleasant about this exchange, how well we get along with one another, how sometimes the meeting of strangers is like a bath in the finest brine. Home, we put the presents under the tree and fill the stockings; and I think back over the psychology of the hour: the authorities of goodness, Santa Claus and the heroic cowboy, in whose image and likeness we hope to be created. There is something like a nightmare in this excess of presents—crystal glasses, velvet robes, a shrimp dish, trucks and cars—but somehow, not soberly, I grope from some other, less bewildering, meaning in this nightmare and I think that with these foolish excesses we struggle, intuitively, to express our convictions about the abundance of life.

•

I wander around the city. Here and there I see a face that reminds me of the sheer delight we take in one another's company, and I mean all kinds: friendship, horseplay, inventiveness, tenderness, and the darkest coupling. And here and there I see a face that reminds me with deep sadness of the fact that I am not young anymore, that I have suffered some losses and am not content, and that the sense of standing on a curb, looking out levelly at the world, as a young man does, is gone. I have my pleasures, God knows, and there is a thrust of life in me that time has not changed, but my eyes are no longer clear, my skin firm, or my hair bright. However, some girls still seem to like me, and you can't have everything. And here and there on the street an impression, a figure, seems inflicted on me; a figure in a belted trenchcoat hurrying up a side street. The figure seems to be one of supreme misdirection. There is some sexuality here, but of what sort? And the young men in cuffless trousers and Italian shoes mean to be attractive but attractive to whom? There is no doubt about the intentions of the men on the Corso, but these youths seem to me mostly to be flirting with the image in the mirror.

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Susie comes home with news that she is on some sort of probation. Her negativism, her digressive negativism are thought to be bad attitudes in class. Our conversation begins in soft voices but then I begin to shout, she cries and throws herself onto her bed, I order her to get up and eat dinner and tell her if this were in Italy I would hit her over the head with a piece of wood, and Federico, catching the harsh or ugly notes in my voice, begins to cry. We sit down to a gloomy table. I read. At eight o'clock sharp the wind springs out of the north with gale force, an inundation of snow and rain. Susie goes for a walk in the storm. Later I speak with her. "I'm indifferent," she says. "I'm a mass of intelligence adrift. I don't care if I sleep in the street."

"Oh, you don't," say I, as the wind flings the rain against the windows. "Would you like to go out and sleep in the street this evening?" Here is sarcasm, fruitless and obscene. I apologize and plead with her for friendship, and lying in bed I ask myself, How can she be indifferent to the beaches of Nantucket, the city of Rome, the pleasures of skiing, the promise of love and friendship?

At four, Federico wakes with a scream. "Get the mother out of the way," he says, and goes back to sleep. What is going on in his mind? Ben is also awake and is afraid of the dark. Getting back to sleep I seem to enter the rich color and shade of a tapestry and lie under lemon trees in whose dark leaves there are many doves. Later, I fancy a very lewd orgy but without any sense of shock or revulsion. I seem to have come to terms with my bones and these courses of speculation and I hope it does not mean any loss of moral awareness.

•

Snow predicted. It begins at around nine in the morning, a dark sky but a hesitant and unimpressive fall. By ten o'clock the ground is covered. By eleven you hear the whining noise of a car stuck in a drift. By twelve all the back roads are closed and there is almost no traffic on the main highway. Schools close. Offices close. There is some primitive camaraderie in this convulsion of nature. I help to shovel the station platform. Mrs. M. suddenly turns on me a burst of confidence about Mrs. V. "My deah, she is ruthless and dishonest." She has the mind of a strong and ruthless man. By half past two there is ten inches or more of fine powder. My friend and I take a walk. Perhaps it is he, I think, who basks in my admiration. I think of animals in this weather, says he, cows and sheep, the doves in their cote. We walk through the Italian garden, all its form now somehow comical and absurd. Dunce caps of snow on the baroque pedestals. The boxwood hedge paved with snow. A peak on the heraldic lion. As we walk up the lawn the fall is so thick that we can't see the big house. I shovel a path and play with my sons. How pleased we are with this turn in the weather. A stray dog appears and disappears. Just before dark, before we draw the curtains, a blue light of great intensity fills the valley. In the dark, Ben and I take a walk. The snow is still falling, blowing. In the few lights, in the few street lights, it shines with a hardness and a brilliance that is unlike its insubstantialness; it shines like cut steel. In the morning A. calls to cancel the trip and the speech. I stand by the bed with the telephone in my right hand and a stiff cock in my left and this is I.

•

Mary, showing me a piece of marble that I bought for her in Rome, says, "I must be kind and gentle, otherwise you would never have given me this." And I wonder, Is murder one of her considerations? I have wanted to wring her neck but I never thought of braining her with a rock. If she did brain me, I think it would be me as an image of someone else.

Federico's third birthday. I would like to write him a fine book and then another and then another, but I must take care of myself. Drank and smoked too much again last night, but coming toward the house—the sapphire lights of a winter day and cardinals whistling in the fir trees—I think that perhaps I can do it, perhaps I can make some sense of it.

Mary complains of fatigue at lunch and my response to this, both affectionate and bitter, is enlarged by a recollection of her mother's complaints. And I also, unfortunately, recall her father's —God rest him—preposterous performance in the kitchen. He mopped the floors when anyone came through, he guarded the stove as if it were a symbol of his honor, he raged and swore at the burdens that were put on him, but if anyone tried to help him by making a piece of toast or squeezing the juice out of a lemon he would go into an insane tantrum. Here are the unreasonable and insatiable hungers of our egotism. He was tired, he was overworked, he was misunderstood, his brilliant intelligence was wasted, and how he struggled, hour after hour, to put himself into this position, to transform himself, so to speak, into a cruel and an idle lash. I ask if I shall cook breakfast in the morning but I am not allowed to cook bacon because I leave it too greasy, I may not poach eggs because the maid doesn't get the yolk off the plates, and I cannot heat milk because I will scald it and stain the pot. These endless obstructions.

•

A sixteen-year-old boy is arrested for selling pornography and sentenced to six months in the pen. His first offense was stealing hubcaps. The judge says that the sentence is the most sorrowful task of his fifteen years on the bench. He is a friend of the family. He admires the boy's parents. He compliments them on their intelligent efforts to cure a wayward son. He hopes that the boy's term in the pen will help to cure him of his lawlessness, will teach him to become, as he says, "a component of society"; and I hear in these words some contemptible prudery that seems to me worse, more of an impediment, than the boy's failing. I can imagine the scenes with the parents, their deep bewilderment and sorrow. Why, while other boys win national scholarships for scientific research, develop their athletic abilities, and lead cleanly and adventurous lives, should their son be destined to sell obscene pictures under street lamps to his schoolmates? I think of X, who posed for indecent photographs but was never apprehended, and

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R.'s friend in Naples who supported his four children in this way, most cheerfully. "The hours are good, signore, and the wages are fair, but it is difficult, one must always seem ardent, even when your head feels like a squash, and the girls are often not beautiful." In Naples it is nearly acceptable, it is almost comical; but not here. But there is something to be said for the boy. Perhaps he has no other way of impressing himself on his schoolmates; perhaps he has inherited his father's colorlessness, that he is driven to distinguish himself in this way. His interest in obscene pictures is natural enough, and through selling them he receives something like the admiration of his classmates and may make enough money to run away. This may be sentimental, but the prudish judgment from the bench seems to restate a false, a shabby vision of pureness that could be the beginning of the trouble.

•

Mary greets me at the door in utter confusion. She means to draw a look of composure over her feeling of revulsion but I step in too quickly for her to complete the maneuver and see how unwelcome I am. She cannot speak to me or look at me.

"Would you like to take a rest?" I ask, as kindly as possible.

"How can I?" she asks. "I have to put up my hair." It all seems comical, but it is a bitter comedy. What vast amounts of misery the spirit can absorb and still rebound, still refresh itself.

•

An unseasonably warm day: fevers in the blood. I walk with Federico. The sense of odors, exhalations, escaping from the earth is volcanic. The whole county stirs like a crater. The imperative impulse is to take off my clothes, scamper like a goat through the forest, swim in the pools. The struggle to sustain a romantic impulse through the confusions of supper, the disputes, the television, the baby's bath, the ringing of the telephone, the stales of the dishpan, but I have in the end what I want and I want this very much.

•

I think, walking with Federico on a spring day, that I will walk with X, find some cold lake or pool, swim in it ballocksy, and have my dirty way with his rotund arse. I let the reverie spend itself, and what does it matter? There is no X, and coming on a cold pool at this time of year I would not want to swim or do the other things I seem to want, but there does seem to be in my head some country, some infantile country of irresponsible sexual indulgence that has nothing to do with the facts of life as I know them. But what interests me is the contradictions in my nature, in anyone's nature, their grandioseness; that in the space of a few minutes I experience crushing shame and then swim into some pure source of self-esteem and confidence that wells up like a spring in a pond. And half asleep I wonder if I do not suffer from some uncured image of women, those creatures of morning, as predators, armed with sharp knives.

•

Mary says that my presence is repressive; she cannot express herself, she cannot speak the truth. I ask her what it is that she wants to say and she says, "Nothing," but what appears in some back recess of my mind is the fear that she will accuse me of being queer. I think this is ridiculous, the area of sensitivity that clings to an old wound. I know my skin, indiscreet and capricious, and can cope cheerfully with all of its ridiculous and romantic yearnings, but I wonder if any of this affects my son. He seems very ready to love me and we play catch on the lawn. At dinner Susie refers to my imminent death and I fly up like an old hen and must learn to have more reserve. I drink too much and have this morning an incoherent memory of what went on. My eyes are sore.

Ben says, about our moving to the country, that the biggest difficulty may be Mary's melancholia. It is a strange thing to say, although he is the master of strange remarks, but I wonder again if something isn't going wrong. Her face seems so drawn, her lips set in pain or anger. I walk with Federico up to the ridge. The setting sun appears to be advancing toward the earth, its shape is so clearly incised in the atmosphere. Its color is a curdled red. Now the fruit trees are all in bloom. The Russian violets have bloomed and gone in the space of a week. Now there are periwinkles, primroses, other violets all

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in bloom. But I am badly disposed and with no reason. We make love and yet I feel forlorn and feel forlorn this morning. A lovely summer day and the birthday of my son and wife. I am writing two pages a day. I should make it four or six.

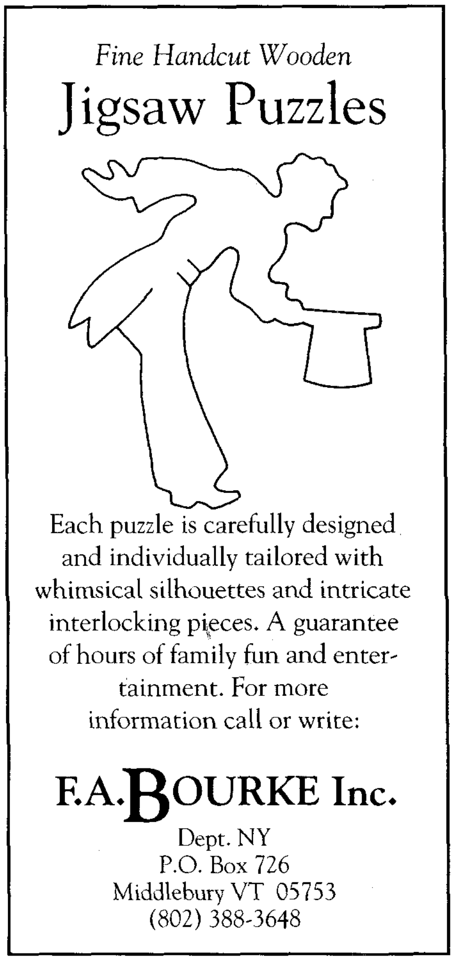
•

I do a little work on the island, six or eight pages, and leave three days earlier than I had planned. Sit and talk with a pleasant, aging investment banker. Observe nothing of the land below. An overcast day in New York. The baneful green glass windows not really a submarine world, not the world in the light of a storm, not even a nightmare world; these travellers, some of them with orchids, moving in a poisonous green light. My homosexual anxieties seem allayed or cured by this change and motion, and I cheerfully watch the people come and go. I think I see a madam and two girls. The madam appears to be a substantial matron—extensively dyed dark-golden hair, a double rope of pearls, a nice tan, only a trace of calculation in the face. The first girl must be nearly fifty but her skin is still white and soft, her arms are round. She wears a hat nearly as big as a wastebasket and shaped like one, but made of the black lace and satin we associate with underwear. The second has green eyes, wears a huge mobcap, her hair dyed red and her lips a coral color along lines that do not conform to her mouth. She sits beside me, and from the heat of her body comes a nice perfume. I am delighted, tickled. Her manner is very genteel and prim, comically so, but at the bottom of her gentility there is some crudeness in speech, some mispronunciations. "My home was in Connecticut," she says, meaning to evoke swimming pools, golf links, but evoking instead the back streets of Bridgeport. I would like to buy her dinner and a drink and go back to her apartment for the night but I am sweaty and rumpled and have no fresh clothes and do not. Perhaps I should. As her taxi draws away she wriggles her gloved fingers at me. I take the train out, feeling contented and substantial. Mary seems happy to see me, and the baby, also the others. We have a pleasant dinner but when I go upstairs she is asleep.

The morning is very dark and the sense of the house is oppressive. I am served my breakfast with a scowl. I go into town, but when I return I feel that something has gone wrong. The fault may be mine. The faces on the street cut at my sense of self, my happiness. I am afraid of having an unsuitable erection. This is morbid, this is neurotic, but much that I see is morbid and neurotic. Very few of the faces I look into seem cheerful and self-contained. I read my stories and some of them seem to me good—"The Wrysons" very bad. Here is a contained, almost a complacent prose, and the substance of the story is nasty, nothing more. I wish my line were stronger, more vigorous, more involved, I wish I could strike a different level of seriousness. Lunch with B., home on the train, my cod sore. Mary cleaning the broom closet in the kitchen. She has repaired the toilet seat, which I should have done, painted the front door. I try to catch the roughness of my own nature, try to see how difficult I am, but there seems to be no bond between us, I seem to have no way of appealing to her. I feel that she does not love me, that she does not even imagine a time when she might. All the means of intercourse seem broken down. She seems crushed with unhappiness, with despair. I give the baby his bath, at the table I reproach Susie for grabbing a sugar doughnut and she cries. I ask why the table should seem so unpleasant and at the back of my mind is the knowledge that Mary's father's table was always a battlefield. I feel that I must speak and yet I do no good. I give the baby his bath, warm his clothes at the fire, and dress him. I read him stories, give him a bottle, and put him to sleep, virtuous I. Susie is out, so is Ben. The S.s come, the S.s go, I watch an old movie on TV.

The boat strike goes on and our plans are unsettled. Work in the garden, sweat, the S.s for drinks. Sickle the back yard, play badminton, go to a garden party. I see a woman I have been blaming for three years for her divorce, but now it occurs to me that perhaps her husband was a neurotic sorehead and that the fault was mostly his. Talk freely with Mary and tie a can on. A beautiful summer's day. Shifting winds. —JOHN CHEEVER

(This is the second of two parts. Selections from later decades will appear in future issues.)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REFLECTIONS

A SUMMER IN THE REVOLUTION: 1987

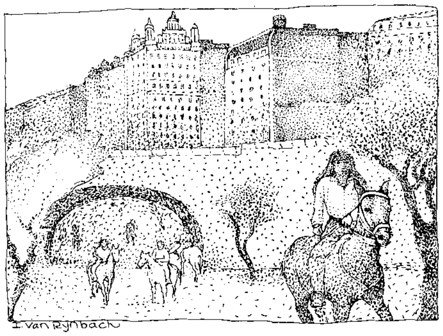
A STOUT mulatto woman in her fifties is standing at the corner near the Hotel Presidente, on the Avenida de los Presidentes, in Havana. A hot August afternoon has just begun. About fifty yards away, a long line is waiting for a bus. The woman, who is clearly sweltering, clutches a television set. As I park my car to go into the hotel, she asks whether my car is a taxi or, if not, whether I accept fares. She's going to Old Havana, fifteen minutes away. She makes it clear that she has no dollars—a necessary stipulation in a city relentlessly fishing for tourists. Tourists can use the Cuban peso, which has a bank value of about a dollar and a street value of about fifteen cents, only under tight restrictions. I tell the woman that I'm merely an Argentine tourist, but that I have a couple of free hours and would be glad to drive her. She climbs into the front seat without letting go of the television set, which she keeps on her knees. She declines to put it in the trunk or on the back seat. She's come all the way from Santiago, four hundred and forty-five miles from Havana, to pick it up. Her children, who live in Venezuela and run a pizzeria in Maracaibo, had it sent to her with a Venezuelan tourist who is staying at the Presidente.

The woman invites me to her sister's, a first-floor apartment in a rundown two-story building, where she is staying; I am served coffee and a glass of water, and introduced to her family: the sister, an aging woman seated in a rocking chair; the brother-in-law, an elderly retired man; her oldest nephew, a physician, who apologizes for being in his underwear, and who brings in his wife and infant; the youngest niece, an engineering student, seated on a sofa and reading old comic books published in Mexico, in which Dick Tracy keeps brandishing his mighty fist. From a table I pick up a magazine similar to *Reader's Digest* which was published in Moscow in Spanish and features themes and heroes long since left behind by current Soviet thinking.

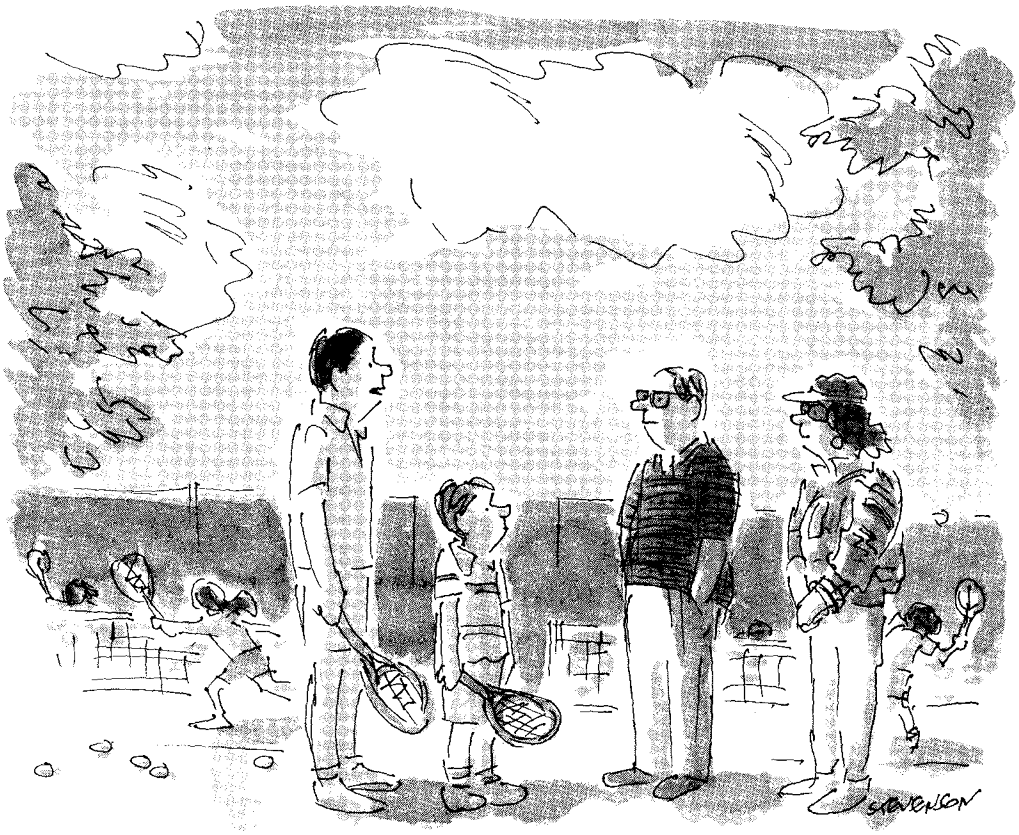
The whole scene has an air of marginality, age, neglect. I'm received in the living room, whose high ceiling reveals in certain peeling sections its former colors; its walls are dingy; it has wide colonial windows facing the street, with broken panes that have been replaced by cardboard; the meagre furniture can barely stand up, so pitiful and rickety are the pieces.

I wait a discreet while for something to happen—to hear complaints, to be asked for help, to be questioned about the outside world represented by the television set, to hear the Revolution praised, to be asked to buy the family something in the shops for foreigners and high-ranking Cubans, which are inaccessible to most Cubans. But there is only squalor, monosyllables, prolonged silences, failure, and a repressed joy in the quick glances at the television set that has arrived from Maracaibo. I say goodbye when it becomes evident that my presence is making my hosts uncomfortable.

It occurs to me that *waiting* is Cuba's inner dynamic. Cubans are waiting for an outcome, a result, a finale. Those of us who come here are waiting, hoping to discern clearly what it is they're waiting for. When you arrive, you're looking forward to spontaneous conversations with the Cuban people. You're waiting for some sensible statistic to eradicate the nightmare of hundreds of books, declarations, manifestos, all suspected of bad faith; for one or two people on the street to shed some light on the confusion that enemies and skeptics have stirred up surrounding the Cuban adventure. It is in the streets, after all, rather than in the offices of functionaries, that one hopes to see the traps laid by fanatics fly open. You're waiting and hoping that the Cuban street will be more lucid in explaining Cuba than the countless justifications brandished in the name of Latin-American poverty. At times this seems possible. A friend explained, "Neither as happy as statistics say nor as unhappy as exiles in Miami say." I was reluctant to inform him that something telling had happened to him: he was now a resigned man. My friend, too, had confined himself to waiting for the outcome.



In 1959, as a journalist, I had accompanied Fidel Castro from a press conference at the National Press Club, in Washington, to his enthusiastic meetings in New York and to his appearance, shortly afterward, in Buenos Aires. He seemed thin when I saw him then: wearing a uniform beautiful in its youthfulness and modesty; standing near a barbecued-beef stand where workers ate lunch; etched against the muddy Río de la Plata that Jorge Luis Borges found so moving, on the shore of the sandy harbor. He refused to acknowledge that because he had overthrown the dictator Fulgencio Batista, Juan Perón's great friend, Argentine workers regarded him with distrust and avoided approaching him. However, he was thrilled that the most beautiful women of the Argentine bourgeoisie—who, unlike the workers, hated Perón—came up to him on the street and kissed him. I gazed at Castro intently, a young man apparently without ideology, who represented an eruption without a political program—one more of those violent eruptions which in Latin America are quickly, naïvely labelled revolutions. My generation, being admirers of Augusto César Sandino, and devoted to the Caribbean Legion, a group of exiles brought together by the Costa Rican political leader José (Pepe) Figueres, had long struggled against common enemies: Somoza in Nicaragua, Batista in Cuba, Duvalier in Haiti, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. The Caribbean Legion had vowed to destroy them. Comandante Fidel had put an end to one of them. We savored the word "Comandante," buried in our nostalgia since 1939, when we lost the Spanish Republic. Never could those commanders of ours be retrieved, those warriors who were genuinely of the people. What had happened in Cuba—the eruption—meant that in the struggle toward a more just society, as we had conceived it, everything was possible: youthful idealists could do for the people exactly what needed to be done, with the unique strength that solidarity, generosity, and sacrifice provide.



"His serve is excellent, his forehand is strong, his backhand and net game are coming along well, but he needs a louder grunt."

ALMOST thirty years later, in Cuba, someone explained to me that the one for whom everything is possible is the Comandante, and young idealists await his order to follow him. This was not a political explanation, complicated by statistical manipulations, tactical considerations, and historical strategies. It emerged from an unexpected conversation about Bertolt Brecht, on the road between Havana and the Hemingway Marina, with two young students from a drama school where Stanislavsky realism still holds sway.

Upon arriving in Havana, I had rented what seemed to be the only air-conditioned car obtainable in Cuba—a run-down Japanese sedan. (I had waited a couple of days for a Mexican tourist and his daughter to return it to the state firm that handles all rental vehicles.) And then, one balmy morning, I headed west. I crossed the lovely avenues and gardens in the zone designated for embassies, high government officials, and high-ranking officers of the armed forces, and kept on along Fifth Avenue, which soon turns into the road leading to La Boca and the seaport of Mariel. The two girls had signalled with their thumbs, and there we were, travelling together.

When it comes to laughter and smiles, glances, pursed lips, and hand gestures, conversations with ordinary Cubans are spontaneous, but real words seldom come forth—merely the sounds of set speeches. Words, of course, can reveal contradictions; there's no danger of voicing contradictions in a set speech. Words may reveal curiosity about other experiences. No one can appear curious while delivering a speech.

Since asking sensitive questions was useless, I began the conversation with spontaneous confessions of my own—stories about my life, my friends, my family, corners of faraway cities, poetry recitations, plans. On learning that they were studying Brecht at the drama school, I described a production of "Mother Courage" in Buenos Aires with the actress Alejandra Boero; I managed to hum one of Lotte Lenya's songs; long ago, I said, I'd seen a film based on "The Threepenny Opera."

The girls were studying the Marxist content of Brecht's work; his exile; his return to East Germany, where he had chosen to live, though he could have lived in Paris. But the girls' teachers had told them nothing about Brecht's endless irony, his imaginative and corrosive sense of humor. Nor had they mentioned Brecht's ever-present need to test how far Marxism could tolerate the impertinence of desperation and the Germans' anguished romanticism.

There were no questions, not the slightest hint of an interview. I simply said I'd found all of this in Brecht, and much more. I spoke to them about Weimar Germany, the Spartacists, the assassination of Walther Rathenau, the German essence in Brecht—all the while watching their faces for any sign of recognition. But the girls were certain that that whole decadent world which I saw passionately incorporated in Brecht's irony did not constitute a Brechtian theme. Brecht's inspiration came from the heart of the people, they said. The Comandante, they said, also loved Brecht.

"He loves Brecht?"

"For his devotion to the people."

The girls got out of the car, and I drove slowly on to Mariel. When I got there, I stopped in the small square in front of the church. The priest, a Canadian, was in attendance only twice a week, I was told, and that day he wasn't there. A girl had come to baptize her baby. She knocked in vain, peered through the windows of the house adjoining the church, walked back and forth, and then left. I sat down on a bench not far from an old man who was smoking in silence. Brecht would have treated those two girls humorously, amused at the flood of ideology from two beautiful, sweet-smelling roses burnished by the Caribbean sun. He would have argued with them about the Comandante. Brecht's pathetic joy, his need to innovate, to modify, would have moved them more than the Comandante's hyperbolic declamations. If the Comandante aspired to destroy an old world in order to create a new one, I thought, no wonder there was no room for any genuine understanding of Bertolt Brecht.

The girls had left me with an empty feeling. The old man barely spoke: he asked me for a cigarette and introduced me to his little grandson; he said he had known a few Argentines in the past. He made no comment on the great exodus that had taken place in Mariel a few years before, when a hundred and fourteen thousand Cubans departed from the port for Miami. He didn't evade my questions. As often happens in Cuba, he simply didn't answer.

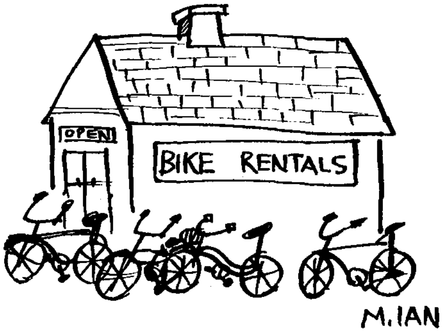
ACCORDING to the Chinese (according to the Cubans), certain dreams represent numbers, and these are numbers to place bets on. The horse is No. 1. For that reason, the Comandante is called the Horse. He also has other titles. I kept a page of the official newspaper *Granma* (named after the yacht that brought Castro's rebels to Cuba in 1956)—all newspapers here are official, of course—that reproduced a letter from the National Board of the Federation of Cuban Women. It was addressed to Compañero Fidel Castro Ruz, Commander-in-Chief, First Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, President of the State Council, President of the Council of Ministers. The letter concluded with the assurance that the federation's members were ready to "continue advancing under your guidance." In the press, Castro's name seems always to be accompanied by all those titles. His opponents, in conversation with me in difficult, mutually suspicious circumstances, prefer not to call him by name; stroking their chins, they refer to Comandante. The most recalcitrant of Castro's adversaries are the ex-military ex-companions from the Sierra Maestra and those who participated in the battles waged in the cities against Batista. (The battles in the cities were fiercer and bloodier than those in the mountains.) In the streets he's called Fidel, which sounds like camaraderie but more often proves to be an indifferent, noncommittal way of referring to the Comandante.

Castro's titles, I came to realize, and the people's attitude toward him add up to a neurosis that has become a reflex of society. This was made clear to me during a lengthy conversation at the home of an educated man whose profession I can't name, whose living quarters I can't describe, whose worst moments—a few days—in a Havana prison cell I must not recall, or the reasons for his arrest, or the causes of his being freed. We were sitting in the living room of an old, half-demolished mansion, in which he had had to install a huge tank to offset water rationing. A bucket had to be carried, half full, when you went to the bathroom. (These details can't be used for identification purposes, since the same circumstances obtain in most dwellings.) The radio blared away, and we spoke in whispers. He said that if I glanced out the window he had left open I'd see the window of a neighboring house from which someone from the C.D.R.—the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution—was surely watching us.

In the left-wing literature of Latin America, such committees represent one of the purest expressions of the people in defense of the Revolution. Neighbors on every city street spontaneously keep watch from their own houses to prevent anyone from threatening the victories achieved in 1959. But this man handed me a questionnaire, called the Opinion Collection Form, which good neighbors are supposed to fill out, and which the committees are supposed to take to the police, retaining a copy for themselves.

A good revolutionary records what he hears from his daughter's boyfriend or his wife's cousin, or from his neighbors and colleagues on the street, in the darkness of a theatre, in one of the endless lines for milk, bread, or ice cream. He does this even when he is unable to identify the speaker.

Under the heading "Information on the Individual Expressing an Opinion" one is supposed to indicate the person's sex, approximate age, and occupation:



(1) professional or technician
(2) executive
(3) administrative employee
(4) industrial or construction worker
(5) service worker
(6) unspecified worker
(7) agricultural or fisheries worker
(8) private farmworker
(9) worker in a coöperative
(10) self-employed
(11) soldier
(12) student
(13) housewife
(14) retired
(15) unemployed
(16) unknown.

Under the heading "Integration" there are only two categories: (1) revolutionary, (2) disaffected.

There are also spaces, of course, for indicating the geographical area and the date. But the items of information most useful to the police are requested in detail under the headings "Place Where Comment Was Made" and "Effect of Comment on Listeners." Place is to be specified as

(1) work center
(2) study center
(3) a home
(4) the street
(5) business center
(6) recreation center
(7) a transportation vehicle.

The specifications for "Effect" are not very sophisticated: (1) approval on the part of the listeners, (2) disapproval, (3) indifference. On the back of the form is a space for the text of the overheard opinion. At the bottom the signature of the informer is supposed to appear.

This questionnaire represents a collective state of mind in which the ordinary Cuban is either a friend of the Revolution and its Comandante—or else the enemy of everyone. Even the most innocent, resigned Cuban, the most apolitical and defenseless, may heave a sudden sigh while standing under the sun in a long line, in front of a shoe store, and remark that his brother in Caracas or his cousin in Miami may soon be sending him some shoes. At the outset of the Soviet revolution, when Lenin was still accepting a measure of freedom of expression, and before Ilya Ehrenburg was being guided by Stalin's instructions and silently accepting the murder of his friend Isaac Babel, Ehrenburg wrote a novel about how a man named Lazik Roitschvantz, weighed down by personal troubles, sighed while a Communist leader at a public function was making a speech, which poor Lazik wasn't listening to. The sigh was the beginning of a prolonged complication with the revolutionary police. That period of Soviet literature is, of course, unknown in Cuba, though reading it could have spared the Cubans from repeating history. This time, however, Marx's famous joke—that every great historical event occurs twice, "the first time as tragedy, the second as farce"—isn't borne out: in this instance, it was a tragic event in the Soviet Union, and today, seventy years later, it is a tragedy in Cuba.

IN Cuba, one is informed daily that the Comandante's initiatives have produced historic changes in the cultivation or harvesting of sugarcane, in housing construction, in military strategy in Africa, in the teaching of language, in street-cleaning. If one asks what prompts the Comandante to make speeches lasting for hours in the neighborhoods or before television cameras, the reply seems to impugn the intelligence of the person posing the question: The Comandante speaks in order to teach; he's a pedagogue; he resorts to the best form of collective education, for the citizens all pay attention to him—it's the fastest way to educate. Those who believe that forcing people to listen to a single opinion on every subject has nothing to do with education are very cautious—but perhaps decreasingly so—about exposing themselves to the "Opinion Collection Form" employed by the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution.

In my weeks in Cuba, I was unable to avoid constant collisions with the Comandante's omniscience. Any topic I broached produced references to some speech of his. On one occasion, the Argentine Ambassador in Havana invited me for lunch at his residence, along with Ricardo Alarcón, Castro's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. This knowledgeable man, who had spent many years in New York as the head of the Cuban delegation to the United Nations, couldn't conduct an intelligent conversation on the Latin-American situation, because every argument had to conclude with an emphasis on the role that Fidel Castro would play. I declared in vain, for instance, that supplying arms to Salvadoran guerrillas or maintaining an ideological hold on Daniel Ortega could have no major influence on Latin-American affairs. Señor Alarcón simply denied this: he knew the role that Castro fancied he occupied in the world, and wasn't about to err in the role he himself was obliged to play in the presence of a journalist.

This kind of madness, with its resulting collective supporting hypocrisy, is the dominant reality I encountered in Cuba: it defines society, government, cultural life, work, family relations.

If hypocrisy, corruption, and resignation are second nature in Cuban society, ignorance constitutes its nervous system. The statistics regarding the winning battle against illiteracy are infuriating. If it is true that every Cuban knows how to read and write, it is likewise true that every Cuban has access to nothing worth reading and must be very cautious about what he writes. In the bookstore at Twenty-third and L Streets, opposite the Habana Libre Hotel, the shelves are overflowing with Spanish translations of Russian writers, and so are the shelves

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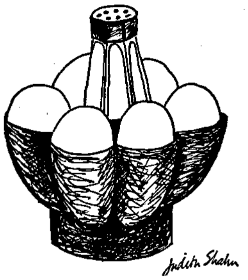
at the city's most important bookstore, a few yards away from the Floridita—the restaurant, in Old Havana, where Ernest Hemingway drank Daiquiris. I spent a few hours at both shops, watching Cubans acquire works that Soviet historians and writers had already depicted as falsifications of the Soviet reality. The spectacle was pathetic. Just a few months before the 1987 celebration in Moscow of the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution, Havana bookstores were offering Cubans an anthology of the greetings received by the Kremlin on its sixtieth anniversary. The scene struck me as a symbol of the sclerosis of a regime unable to accept modifications of any sort.

Books are very cheap in Cuba—cheaper, perhaps, than in any other country in the world—but that makes them all the more an insulting hoax; their low price is part of the all-pervasive hypocrisy. The newspaper *Novedades de Moscú* ("Moscow News"), which is one of the promoters of *glasnost* and is published in the Soviet Union in a Spanish edition, was insufficiently available in Cuba to supply all those lining up at the newsstands to get a copy. It became for Cubans a kind of samizdat, but those who could enjoy it didn't dare include its topics spontaneously in a conversation. (I did see photocopies circulating among the few activists devoted to human rights.)



Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, a Vice-President of the Cuban Council of State and the Communist who lent his party's support to Castro's guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra—at a point when many of his comrades were defining Castro as a bourgeois adventurer—was asked in 1983, on his seventieth birthday, by the journalist Susana Tesoro to name his favorite authors and favorite books. His reply, printed in the magazine *Bohemia*, was "Maybe I'd choose a selection of Martí, for its evocative power. Of course I could choose among writers: my preferences would probably be Faulkner over Hemingway, though I admire both; I'd choose Shakespeare over Tennessee Williams or García Lorca; Günter Grass and García Márquez, though detesting the former as a political being and loving the latter as a best friend." This flowing response presents an interesting, pluralistic literary panorama, but one that is accessible only to those authorized to visit other countries. I went through the bookstores in Havana and was unable to find a single copy of Faulkner, Williams, or Grass.

There is much literacy in Cuba and too much printed paper. The Cuban magazine *Somos Jóvenes* ("We Are Young") once published a survey of reading habits, and one student's answer was "Yes, the bookstores are full, but you don't always find something to buy." The Cuban writers Leonardo Padura, Miguel Mejides, and Norberto Codina told the Havana newspaper *Trabajadores* ("Workers") that publishing houses "prefer to stick to their annual plan of printing a hundred thousand copies of three titles instead of publishing a hundred titles in editions of three thousand copies." The three writers noted that "we are forty years behind in foreign literature."

Gabriel García Márquez, of course, is uncensored—except when he refers enthusiastically, as he often does, to *perestroika*. The Colombian writer's famous dialogue with Mikhail Gorbachev during the Moscow Film Festival in 1987, which was transmitted by the Soviet news agency, wasn't published in the Cuban press. García Márquez may be the man who can most influence Fidel Castro. With respect to international opinion, he's the most important public-relations instrument the Comandante has. His personal intervention with Castro has occasionally helped to gain the freedom of imprisoned intellectuals, though repeated appeals he has made for an improvement in the quality of the Cuban press have failed totally. Anecdotes frequently circulate in Latin America concerning García Márquez's whispered criticism in endless private conversations with Fidel Castro about the state of affairs in Cuba. But this confidential whispering, accounts of which are passed on to intimates by both men, strikes me as an act more of complicity than of conscience—especially in view of the hyperbole of the eulogies that the writer has publicly lavished on the Comandante.

When I read one of Gabriel García Márquez's essays on the Comandante, I was reminded of paeans to Stalin—of the whole state of mind described by Arthur Koestler in "Darkness at Noon." García Márquez praises Fidel Castro for needing only six hours of sleep after a day's hard work—the same six hours that were often presented as proof of Josef Stalin's vitality, extolled in writings that also described his Kremlin window lit until the small hours of night—and praises the wisdom of the Comandante in stating that "learning to rest is as important as learning to work."

If the cumulative tasks in Fidel Castro's workday as it is described by García Márquez are counted up, the Castro who emerges is a prodigy—someone who triumphs by supernatural intelligence: "His rarest virtue is the ability to foresee the evolution of an event to its farthest-reaching consequences," and "He has breakfast with no less than two hundred pages of news from the entire world" (a long breakfast, surely), and "He has to read fifty-odd documents" daily. And the list goes on: "No one can explain how he has the time or what method he employs to read so much and so fast. . . . A physician friend of his, out of courtesy, sent him his newly published orthopedic treatise, without expecting him, of course, to read it, but one week later he received a letter from Castro with a long list of observations. . . . There is a vast bureaucratic incompetence affecting almost every realm of daily life, especially domestic happiness, which has forced Fidel Castro himself, almost thirty years after victory, to involve himself personally in such extraordinary matters as how bread is made and the distribution of beer. . . . He has created a foreign policy of world-power dimensions." Fidel Castro, then, has a secret method, unknown to the rest of mankind, for reading quickly, and he knows a lot about orthopedics, and yet thirty years after the revolution he hasn't managed to organize a system for baking bread and distributing beer.

IT'S two in the afternoon, and I'm in Cumanayagua. I left Havana thinking I was headed southeast for Trinidad, the old Spanish port on the south coast, but I took the wrong road. When I was finally back on the highway, I offered a ride to a young girl who was hitchhiking; she indicated on my map that if I was going to Trinidad she would leave me at Cienfuegos, where a secondary road would take her to Cumanayagua. She had been in Havana and was wearing a yellow T-shirt with the inscription, in English, "Catch a Guy." We sang tangos as we drove. That night, after covering more than two hundred miles, and stopping at various places—I had to wait at a bar for one of the other customers to empty a glass in order to get a beer—I made a note: "Vegetation and landscape, Caribbean; music and sensuality, African; the language derives from Spain; but daily life is as American as the bell jar covering the island allows." Since the bar was not for tourists, I was able to pay in Cuban pesos, which I'd bought on the black market. There is never a shortage of glasses in places where only dollars can be spent, of course.

The girl riding with me didn't get out at Cienfuegos, because I insisted on taking her to Cumanayagua, some twelve miles to the east.

On my worktable I have five pictures I took of the girl and of her family home. It was a small wooden house in which grandparents and, possibly, great-grandparents had lived: three rooms, meticulously painted, with a dilapidated outhouse in back to cover a hole in the ground that served as a toilet. The girl pumped water into a bucket for me to take along to the outhouse. She pumped a little more into a washbasin, gave me some soap, and I washed my hands. She mentioned that it was worse in the city of Cienfuegos, where apartment buildings are supplied with running water only six hours a day. Here there was always water running in the underground streams beneath the village. Then I was given some coffee and a glass of water.

Her father died fighting in Angola, and the family was awarded a medal by the Army. The burial was in Angola, since the government wasn't repatriating the bodies of its soldiers at that time. (Various explanations were offered me in Havana for the decision not to repatriate the dead: the cost, the climate of despair that would be created in local cemeteries, the recurrence of that mood on the anniversaries of the deceased.)

No one in the family asked me any questions, but they seemed amused by my stories about Argentina, about Evita Perón. I suggested having dinner together, but the girl, laughing, showed me that the icebox was empty. Her gaiety was contagious, like that of many Cubans. Through the windows I saw some neighbors eying the unexpected Japanese car parked next to the humble dwelling. They probably assumed, the girl said, that it was a diplomat's vehicle. It occurred to me that we could perhaps go and buy some provisions—a bottle of rum, a lobster. But there are no tourist stores in Cumanayagua, and the stores for Cubans are closed at that hour. Besides, there's rationing. The girl went outside to a small plot of land in back, where the outhouse was, and pulled two fruits from a tree. We ate guavas.

There was also a television set, and two dolls, and a double row of assorted empty bottles adorning some shelves. A plant hung from the ceiling. The mother hadn't remarried, the two sisters were divorced, and the girl was engaged. She was studying in a school in Havana, where she also lived; she was graceful, charming, and animated. I suggested that she dance a bit, and sing. I told her that I was falling in love with her even though I'm almost half a century older than she is. The mother laughed. The girl said that the mother was the most beautiful of them all and that we'd make a fine couple. I showed them a picture of my wife and grandchildren, and we laughed some more.

The girl wanted me to sing for her mother the tangos we sang on the trip. I felt a bit ridiculous: an Argentine-Ukrainian Jew in his sixties, almost bald, gray-haired, fat, whom Cubans ask to sing tangos but don't ask whether he knew Che Guevara. I can hardly be taken for a Río de la Plata macho. The family often listened to the radio broadcasts of María Luisa Macbeth, which are devoted exclusively to the tango. Cubans enjoy this sad music—those anguished, melancholy verses, which speak of failures and betrayals, and which sprang from Buenos Aires brothels almost a century ago.

I spent a couple of hours with the family, then drove on to Trinidad, and stopped at a hotel overlooking the sea a few miles from the city. Many times I have thought about that girl, and have looked at the five snapshots taken on that visit. A friend of mine had warned me that not everything in Cuba is a

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message, but I think there was a message there.

No one in the little wooden house in Cumanayagua expressed any desires or dreams. Is such passivity normal? During an extended encounter, won't certain anxieties surface, the dream of attaining something remote, a longing to be elsewhere? I feel that in some important sense I failed this girl. It would have been hard, but even in Cuba, in that remote, wretched town amid green tropical hills, I should have found some way of shaking off the passivity, of enriching the monotony, of casting a bottle into the sea, of issuing a warning, of establishing some connection for them with the outside world. They asked for nothing, I offered nothing. No link was established, despite the fact that the three of us, that afternoon in Cumanayagua, all loved one another.

THE small fishing port of Cojímar, three and a half miles east of Havana, has been converted into a permanent memorial to Ernest Hemingway. The writer used to go out fishing from Cojímar, and in his honor an annual fishing contest has been held at a nearby yacht club since 1957. In May, 1960, a year and a half after the triumph of the Revolution, Ernest Hemingway and Fidel Castro met for the only time, at that year's contest. There are numerous photographs of that meeting, but nothing noteworthy in the words that were exchanged before witnesses—mere formalities, really.

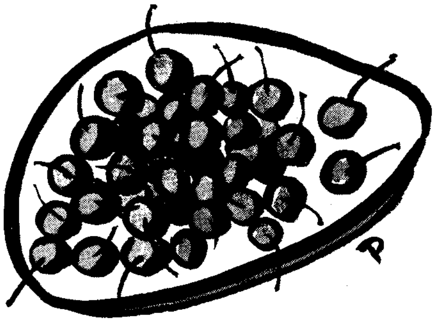
The revolutionaries never viewed Hemingway sympathetically; he had taken little interest in Cuba (where he had a house for two decades) or in the fight against Batista or in the bearded guerrillas of the Sierra Maestra. The Hemingway cult, including the museum established in his home, Finca Vigía, in San Francisco de Paula, a southeastern suburb of Havana, was created more as a tourist attraction and a propaganda device than anything else. It is undoubtedly a successful operation; in fact, I had the impression that no other place in Cuba is visited by as many tourists as Finca Vigía, or not with as much pleasure. Since Hemingway's suicide, in 1961, attempts have been made to infer signs of sympathy for Cuba on his part, affinities, a declaration, a gesture. Although it's never stated explicitly, the tourist gets the impression that Hemingway supported Fidel Castro, that the writer is part of the Revolution. The truth is that, despite an essay by García Márquez entitled "Our Hemingway," the regime has never managed to establish a solid link between Hemingway and Castroism.

An Argentine journalist, Rodolfo Walsh, questioned Hemingway closely on the matter a year before his death, at the time of the writer's final departure from the island, but, amid the tumult of the Havana airport in 1960, the reply had little relation to the journalist's incisive questions. Hemingway spoke nine words in Spanish, though Walsh had questioned him in English: "*Vamos a ganar. Nosotros los cubanos vamos a ganar.*" ("We are going to win. We Cubans are going to win.") And he added, this time in English, "I'm not a Yankee, you know."

Ever since, everyone has made what he would of these words, the only words the writer spoke about a country that for years had been undergoing a cruel revolutionary struggle and that for seventeen months had been ruled by a leader who occupied page 1 of every newspaper—a leader whom Hemingway never publicly mentioned.

With the exception of the worship of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, no worship is promoted more in Cuba than the worship of Ernest Hemingway. The day of my visit to the museum at Finca Vigía, I find amid a group of Italians and Bulgarians two socialist girls from West Germany, Ana and Susana, with whom I have lunch at Cojímar before returning to Havana. Neither of them knows Spanish, but one speaks rudimentary English. Like many tourists, they've come to Cuba because of their idealization of Che Guevara, and because the Cuban tourist agency subsidizes their vacations.

I wander around outside Finca Vigía, which you enter by crossing a modest little street of small wooden houses, in which Hemingway's former neighbors still live. When you talk to them, their comments echo the official Hemingway cult—a cult so well organized that it prompted García Márquez to say in 1982 of Fidel Castro, "In his long, frequent trips to the interior of the country, he always carries in his car a jumbled pile of government documents to study, and you often see among them two red-covered volumes of Hemingway's selected works."



In one of the houses on that street, in an open veranda at the top of three steps, a slight gray-haired old woman is seated. She lets me rest a bit after I ask for a glass of water. Seated on a rocking chair, I keep her company, as she waits for the milkman, who's late this August Sunday. Josefina Anía, seventy-nine years old, has lived in that house for half a century. Her children played with Hemingway's, but the writer wasn't a likable neighbor. His widow, on the other hand, was a pleasant woman. Doña Josefina's two daughters live in Cuba and look after her. Her three sons went to Miami.

IN a country that does not have honest statistics, or has put its statistics at the service of a political goal, conversation, for better or worse, becomes the only reliable informant. One fact that emerged from my conversations with Cubans was that there had been an explosive outbreak of divorce in the past fifteen years, caused primarily by the terrible housing shortage.

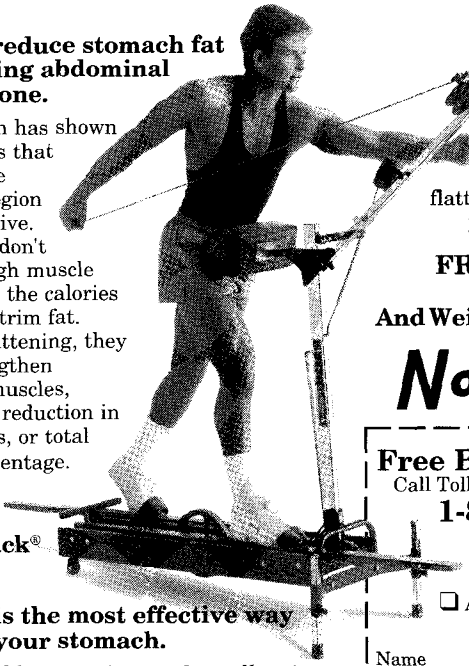
The Revolution has constructed the housing projects, with their two- or three-bedroom units, that are typical of all modern cities. (Much time and money were invested in conceiving an architecture to serve the Caribbean and the Revolution.) But no matter how many projects are built, housing is still inadequate. What seriously impairs these buildings is the use of low-quality materials, errors in design, and shortages of running water and electricity. When a window is broken, it's very hard to get it replaced, because of the acute shortage of glass. Broken pipes are even more serious: it takes weeks even to get permission for a replacement. There is no paint to be had, and almost all the houses I visited still have their original coat.

Here is where one senses most strongly the disaster produced by official intolerance of those experts who failed to adapt themselves, whether because they would not or could not, to the machinations of permanent intrigue that dominate the Castro Revolution. If you weren't good at dealing with the machinations, if you didn't proclaim the Revolution to be more efficient than plain, simple efficiency, you were most unlikely to be called upon to participate in construction plans. An architect told me he had sought refuge in the university, giving a course in the history of architecture, because there was no longer anything to construct. Yet, he said, it didn't make sense any longer to teach construction in a country where an architect's only opportunities depend on a bureaucracy, with its stifling planning terminology.

Prerevolutionary housing is in an indescribable state of deterioration. And the wooden shacks in the outlying quarters continue to serve the same function they served in the time of Batista. Dwellings have been divided and subdivided. Mattresses are scattered on the floors, in courtyards, and in corridors, and are aired during the day. They're laid down in a prearranged pattern, which leaves an open path, known to everyone. It would be dangerous otherwise, because someone coming home late or wanting to use the bathroom during the night could step on the head of a family member or a neighbor. The rooms are divided by sheets hung on ropes stretched from wall to wall. If someone has political access to the officials who allot material, it's possible to obtain bricks, plasterboard, glass, wood, perhaps a little zinc, with which the dividers can be improved. The hardest articles to obtain are paint and glass. In such places, there is a constant flux of population, owing to marriages, births, moving. And everything must be absorbed into the existing housing. The heat, the lack of water and light, and long lines in front of toilets early in the morning are other elements that have led to the erosion of the family unit and the multiplication of divorces.

When you walk through Havana, it's painful to see marvellous Spanish-colonial-style houses that, though they are bursting with inhabitants, seem deserted and abandoned. You feel the loss of the "City of Columns," of which Alejo Carpentier wrote, "evoking potential jungle trunks, shafts of rostral columns, inconceivable forums . . ."

But, sad as the aesthetic loss is, one



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senses that something more profound has occurred: the perversion of family ethics. The loss of family identity was evolving at the same time that seminars of architects invited to Cuba were enthusiastically contemplating the possibility of a revolutionary aesthetic in housing and a revolutionary ethic in workers' attitudes during the construction of that housing.

Cuba has a proliferation of unverifiable statistics, and also of predictions. The government has estimated that by 1991 six hundred thousand tourists will visit the country annually. But Castro, in a speech declaring that Cuba continues to be the true and perhaps the only genuine socialist country, informed Cubans that they would be unable to use the hotels and other facilities reserved for foreign tourists. Tourism will presumably bring in a large portion of Cuba's convertible-currency earnings, and, the Comandante said, "only a petit-bourgeois dandy is unable to understand why Cubans can't use those rooms." The bars set aside for Cubans will presumably remain without drinking glasses.

I discussed the subject of tourism with Vice-President Rodríguez, a man of culture, good humor, sophistication, and tolerance for pluralism. He was the one official Cuban I met who could take some of the hyperbolic slogans of the bureaucracy as a joke. We spoke about the importance of tourism for Cuba, and I suggested that significant earnings in foreign currency could not be expected from the current subsidized tourism. A tourist of means wants places to spend money, newspapers and magazines to read, night life. All tourism brings a measure of corruption—or, at least, great liberality in customs, as witness Spain, Greece, Israel. Indeed, the Vice-President said, that had been foreseen, and Cuba was prepared for certain things, such as allowing the entry of *Time* and *Newsweek* and of some United States, Canadian, and European newspapers, and tolerating a certain amount of night life. But Cuba would not tolerate what goes on in Varna, the bathing resort on the Black Sea, where, he said, Bulgarian youths go to bed with mature German women just to get a pair of jeans.

Quite a number of tourists are coming to Cuba because they dream about the hot island and because the trip and most meals and hotel costs are subsidized by the government. At breakfast one day, I happened to share a table in the hotel dining room with two men, Spaniards, between the ages of thirty and forty, who had arrived just that morning. I assumed that they felt committed to the Revolution, but no, not at all. Elections had taken place in Spain recently, but one of the men hadn't voted, because politics didn't interest him, and the other had cast his vote for the centrist party. They had come to Cuba for the mulatto women. After that confession, they began questioning me, particularly about AIDS. I explained that AIDS had increased in Cuba because of the soldiers returning from Angola and Ethiopia. The Spaniards said they had brought condoms.

A few hours later, during lunch, the men told me that there were lots of girls at the hotel swimming pool during the day, and in nearby streets at night. They're called *jinetas*, or "jockeys." They're also called *cubanas fleteras*, taxi-girls. In my hotel, only tourists with guest passes were even allowed into the elevators. Two hotel attendants monitored entry into the rooms. The Spaniards already had everything set for that night, and would be leaving for the interior of the island the following morning with a group of tourists on a scheduled itinerary. They were not at all happy about leaving Havana.

BECAUSE of the housing shortage, Cuba has a great many extended families: couples live with a set of parents or grandparents, or with aunts or uncles unable to fend for themselves, or by subdividing a family home among the surviving family members. Quarrels, accusations, shouting are replacing family solidarity. The regime's response to this phenomenon has been long-winded and pathetic: government-run love hotels began to multiply. The problems of the nuclear family weren't resolved, but at least the hotels allowed a married couple to have an intimate hour or so.

One evening, as I was leaving the Floridita, a girl was standing around on Bélgica Avenue. Another was stationed, on Obispo Street, next to the statue of Francisco de Albear, the man who in the late nineteenth century organized the drainage systems of Havana. Prostitutes in Havana are as important a source of information as taxi-drivers are in democratic societies. I don't understand why Castro insists that the Revolution has eliminated prostitution through a reëducation campaign; the profession has clearly endured, with only small modifications to adjust to the times. In Cuba, you encounter it everywhere.

The prostitutes who flock to the hotels are for the most part college students or graduates. I assumed that this could be explained by their knowledge of English, but was informed that it stemmed

"You're poison, Lauren, but, these days, what isn't?"

from a craving for consumer goods greater than that of working-class women—goods that were available only in the stores catering to foreigners and high state functionaries. The answer may be more complicated: it may be that this craving is whetted by more extensive information about fashions and products or by belonging to what was once the middle class, and so having the manners and culture to move comfortably among foreigners.

The women prefer not to ask for money, for in dollar stores one has to show identity papers in order to buy something, whereas in stores for Cubans purchases can be made only with the national currency, and, anyway, the shelves are empty. Any foreign currency they accept can be spent only in the black market, and that is risky. What they hope for is an invitation to spend a few days in Varadero, or at the Hemingway Marina or any other beach spot, or to enjoy one long day at a big city hotel and be given some products from the tourist shops. They stock up on lipstick, eyeshadow, chocolate, underwear, stockings, jeans, fake-pearl necklaces, earrings, shoes, blouses, bathing suits. At poolside, they eat lobster and sip rum. The humblest—those on the street, who are generally unemployed—accept Cuban pesos, and are afraid to go into the big hotels, because their impoverished appearance betrays them, and the elevator operators won't allow them to go up to the rooms.

The girl from Obispo Street agreed to tell me what happens when she finds a client and to show me how she operates—where she takes the man, the streets she covers, and, if she's worried about the police, how she avoids them. She was very poor, wanted only Cuban pesos, because she was unemployed, and, anyhow, wouldn't know what to do with dollars. I handed her the Cuban money I had on me. And so we came to El Aseo (The Comfort Station), a love hotel, next to the railway station, in Old Havana. Patiently we waited our turn in line on the street, and finally we entered the waiting room. Everything was very dirty and, like all other interiors, poorly lit. The heat was infernal. People spoke in whispers. Some women were sewing. The girl waited for the best room to be free—a room with a small fan that actually worked. She told me that there wasn't a single prostitute in the waiting room; most of the people there appeared to be married couples. The room we were taken to had a naked electric bulb hanging from the ceiling, a single dirty sheet, an empty bucket on the floor, and one with water, plus a towel. Music was blaring from a loudspeaker, and the fan did work.

This filthy, squalid place was, for many, the means of preserving a married couple's intimacy. An attendant asked for payment in advance, but didn't accept dollars, because the place wasn't for tourists. He dared not ignore the rule, inasmuch as punishment could be very severe. I told him I only wanted to stay for ten minutes to chat with the girl, but that scared him even more, and he practically threw us out. He was so nervous that he thought my Spanish was Italian, and that was what he spoke to me.

When we left, the girl and I walked toward the nearby square—a hangout, she told me, for sellers of black-market dollars. But it was late, and the square was almost deserted.

Later, in a discussion I had with the writer Jesús Díaz, he dwelt on schemes purportedly hatched by the New York and Miami Mafias to fill the more than hundred miles of coastline extending from Havana to Varadero with hotels, gambling casinos, brothels, and drug houses. In the course of my trip, I didn't encounter any casinos, and I didn't investigate the drug traffic. I sensed, however, that the regime's urgent need to acquire dollars will soon prompt it to create tourist zones where everything will be allowed, no questions asked, and Cubans in Miami will be able to send relatives in Cuba commodities unavailable there.

IN Trinidad, because of my accreditation as a journalist, I get a room at a hotel for Cubans. It's summertime, and the place is filled. A hotel for foreigners will soon be installed nearby, in Ancón. According to the price list in my room, I am entitled to a discount on days when there is no water or no light, or in rooms with air-conditioning that isn't working. The swimming pool has no running water—entering it is like going into a Turkish bath—but off to one side, against a wall, are several showers for cooling off.

I tour the old section of the city of Trinidad, which has been maintained

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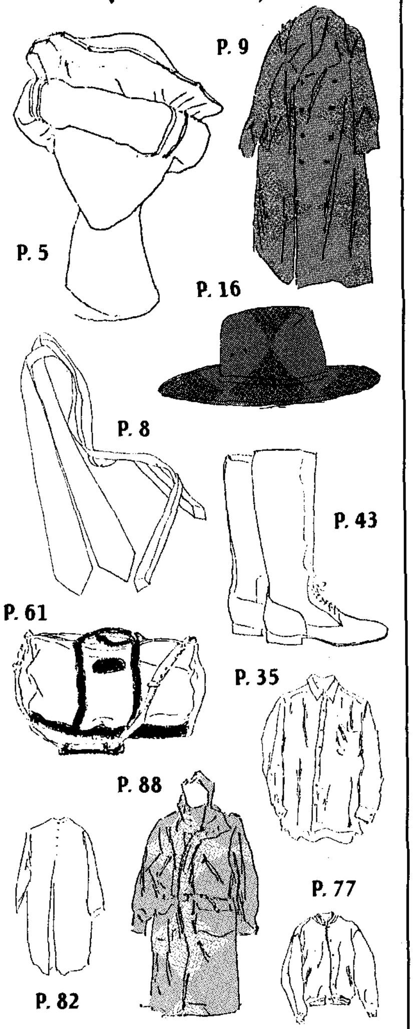

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as a museum just as the Spaniards left it in its period of greatest opulence. Fleets bearing the spoils of America for Spain gathered in this port. As I'm filling the car up with naphtha, using special vouchers bought with dollars, a *mestizo* man of around fifty approaches to ask if, by any chance, I'll be passing through Cienfuegos. Yes, I will, since I'm heading for Havana. He has a ticket for the bus that picks up passengers right on that street, but, to judge by his number, it will surely be seven hours before he reaches Cienfuegos, fifty miles away. He is a worker in an oil refinery and lives where he works—a "live-in worker"; that is, having no residence, he boards in a special refinery dormitory. On weekends, he relies on an improvised bed in the old family home where his mother, sister, and two nephews live. He sleeps in his nephews' room. He is divorced—through his own fault, he says: his wife wouldn't forgive all his "partying." He is proud that his three children have been able to study and are professionals in their own fields. They, too, are live-in workers.

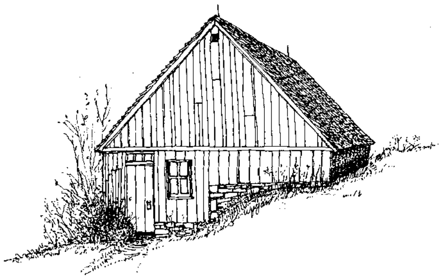
On my way back from Trinidad, I visit the home of the Argentine Fernando Birri. We were friends in our distant youth. Now he dresses like an orthodox monk, wears a bizarre hat, has a long beard, is rather dirty, and is the director of the International School of Film and Television, in San Antonio de los Baños, about twenty miles from Havana. The students live at the school. Birri's house, in Reparto Flores, a residential area of Havana, has two floors, is on the sea, has a private beach, a garden and terrace overlooking the sea, an official car with a chauffeur, and two servants. His is a "protocol house," a residence reserved for friends or special guests of the regime. On the wall is a painting by the Cuban Manuel Mendive, a gift from the Minister of Culture. It depicts strange human and animal forms, many with open mouths, creating, as it were, a universe of oral appetites and expressions.

I thought I'd find Fernando predisposed to elaborate for a journalist on the great adventure of directing a school whose goal is to create a Third World cinema, but he appears somewhat uncertain about how to pigeonhole me. In order to give me a clearer idea of the new institution, he hands me a copy of the "Founding Declaration of the International School of Film and TV of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba; or, Three Worlds," and, to emphasize the importance of its task, he passes on a favorable comment about the school from the Comandante. Fernando has learned to value a favorable opinion from Fidel Castro. I can't resist reminding him that many years back, in our youth, it was important for an Argentine filmmaker to have La Señora express enthusiasm about a film. La Señora was Eva Perón.

I find Fernando thin, emaciated, ill, but filled with enthusiasm, because García Márquez has entrusted him with the filming of one of his works. Special meals are prepared for Fernando, and his medications come from abroad via friends who travel. Any attempt to get a conversation going is futile; his speech is a non-stop rant—an incoherent mixture of magic, sociology, and Third Worldism, with brief whispered interpolations of who's who in Cuba, and the intrigues being woven to depose him from the school. I'm reminded of Ezra Pound.

Back in Havana, I continue to wonder how this ailing windbag given to chaotic harangues managed to become the director of a school financed and supported by Fidel Castro, Gabriel García Márquez, and Hollywood's guilty consciences—Robert Redford, in particular. Here are a few paragraphs from the school's founding director:

> Early, in the warm spring of '86, surrounded by the turquoise-blue Caribbean, beneath the rising moon, the Foundation of New Latin American Cinema, Utopia's castaways, salvaged from a world of imperial injustice and atomic madness, resolves to create the International School of Film and TV in San Antonio de los Baños, to be known also as the School of Three Worlds (Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia). . . .
>
> Like magma beneath the volcanic oxides of Momotombos, there are two subjective impulses, two historic aspirations—diastole and systole of the passion of the people—underlying the rational masonry of this project. They are, fundamentally—diastole—everyone's right to life: to the stomach of life, to the dignity of the stomach. And—systole—the right to the image: to the dignity of the image, everyone's right to satisfy our hunger for the image. . . . Illumined by flashing swirls of Caribbean foam and by the pulsation of spy-satellites, false stars of audiovisual penetration that will not impede the oncoming dawn of our struggles for liberation, in that orgasm of birth of the collective imagination, a long life to the Utopia of the Eye and Ear of the International School of Film and TV in San Antonio de los Baños, Island of Cuba, the reunion of Three Worlds.



Fernando Birri's doubletalk is typical of Castroists, and of the entire bureaucracy of the country. After the Polish experience, it isn't hard to predict that in a free Cuban election Fidel Castro would receive less than ten per cent of the votes; Cuba's economic situation is in many areas a greater catastrophe than Poland's ever was. However, the bureaucracy handles the Castro line very well—though never as effectively as Castroists who wander in and out from abroad. That makes sense. Foreign Castroists have all the motivations and none of the hardships. They cling to Cuba as a way of not accepting the fact that the socialism they grew up with has crumbled with a resounding crash and new forms are emerging. Castroism still projects themes and symbols that are being loudly and publicly buried in other Communist countries: the imminence of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, or simply the United States' threat to a way of life; the injustices of the market economy; the degradation of consumer society; the capacities and self-sacrifice of populist heroes; the very word "Revolution" and the Revolution's idols.

The Castroists abroad do sometimes admit the danger of a total breakdown of Cuba's economy and of a deterioration in the quality of life of those on the island, but that is excused as merely the sort of difficult moment any revolution and every country must undergo. The apologists display a serious, almost pathological capacity for glossing over difficulties, and considering them apart from the country's ruling structure.

In a piece in *Mother Jones*, the American filmmaker and writer Saul Landau describes a visit he made to Cuba in December, 1988, and a filmed interview with the Comandante. Landau writes:

> As Fidel talked, I allowed myself to listen closely and feel that peculiar sensation that I experience in his presence, as if I am meeting with a force of nature, a man so filled with the energy of historical mission that he is almost of a different species.

> Power radiates from him, emitting acute awareness of his needs—and a realization, as well, of how closely these needs have related to the destiny of his nation.

Landau adds, "The Cuban people have achieved sufficient maturity to govern themselves, I thought, even without the presence of their teacher, their guide, their Solomon and Hercules." In fact, Landau and many other foreign Castroists intimate that Castro has perhaps completed his glorious phase.

Herein lies the heart of the drama being played out by foreign Castroists, who don't have to belong to the regime's bureaucracy in order to survive. The crucial question is not Castro, who, despite what Landau says, belongs to the same species as we do, and is subject to the same biological limits. The crucial question is how to analyze what the Castroists see as Castro's glorious phase. It is a worthless formulation if you consider a very simple lesson of history: a nation's right to self-rule is not a matter of whether or not it has reached the maturity to do so; it is simply an inviolable right.

THE writer Miguel Barnet and I had dinner together. His international prestige provides him with protection, and he employs that protection with prudence and discretion. This most important Cuban writer is a charming, cultivated person, master of a prose that isn't based on socialist realism but relies on rich language and years of historical and anthropological research.

Miguel Barnet has remained in Cuba. In 1959, when the Revolution came, he was eighteen. A member of an old island family, he doesn't criticize the Revolution, nor does he write about the Cuba that gave birth to the Revolution. His novels take place much further back in Cuba's history. He reminds me of Dr. Zhivago, who would have been unable to live outside Russia, whether it was czarist or Communist, and thus he reminds me of Boris Pasternak. I told him so at dinner, and tried to learn when he was going to write about the world around him. Not yet, he said—he still hadn't incorporated it into his innermost being. He explained that, having been trained as an anthropologist, he needed a great deal of distance—but in time, not space—for his themes and characters.

Barnet has remained in Cuba with his heirlooms, his pets, his memories, and his intimate relationship with the past. Perhaps he has never actually identified the Revolution with Cuba. In 1986, when his novel "La Vida Real" ("Real Life") appeared, he stated, "What we call our country is nothing other than a vast person embracing us with its trees, mountains, and rivers." In 1966, shortly after he reached the age of twenty-six, his novel "Biography of a Runaway Slave" was published, and he has been the most important Cuban figure in Spanish literature ever since. He has enough irony, suppleness, and control of the language to carry on a conversation without either defending the Revolution and the Comandante or attacking them. Although not a dissident, he is an intelligent man, linked to a world that extends far beyond the Revolution and its Comandante, and he has organized things so as not to disturb that linkage. He said as much in his 1986 speech: "I've gone beyond historical truth to something I feel is much more real—credibility. In so doing, I don't think I've hurt the social history of my country." The Comandante couldn't demand that he include the Revolution in that credibility. Yes, Barnet in Cuba has his world within arm's reach; he breathes it, he strokes it. He does not wish to disturb his creativity by taking on the unremitting efforts of an exile.

He belongs to the Writers' Union, and attends international meetings of intellectuals and artists organized by the regime, but he never makes speeches on internationalism and literature, art and revolution, the Latin-American theme; nor does he thank the Revolution for the possibility of writing, publishing, and uniting with the people; nor is he one of the regime's official spokesmen, who still remind one of the Soviet writers Fyodor Gladkov and Mikhail Sholokhov. He attends foreign book fairs when he is invited, but doesn't torment himself over intrigues that erupt at the Writers' Union when official delegations are chosen. He complains bitterly about the shortage of books to read; is unfamiliar with much of contemporary literature; and has meagre information about what is going on in the world. But he doesn't need all that in order to write his books. He needs Cuba.

At dinner, Barnet criticized the official policy of not recognizing authors' copyrights, and said he hoped to raise

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the subject at the next writers' meeting with the Comandante. I asked how he would do it. He replied only that he considered himself an expert in guessing Fidel Castro's mood, and that the Comandante was very lenient when he was in a good mood. The last time the writers met with Fidel, Barnet didn't feel that the moment was right.

I found Barnet a witty and fluent talker. When the pianist in the hotel dining room dedicated some songs to him, I learned that the hotel had been built by one of Barnet's forebears, who was briefly chief of state. As Barnet talked, he toyed with his glasses a lot, putting them on and taking them off, and he wound up trying on mine.

Though he goes along with the regime's required rituals, his personality is a lively exercise in spontaneity. He didn't scrutinize me, nor was he guarded—the two barriers that had frustrated so many of my attempts at conversation on the island. One of the rituals would start the next day in Managua, where he would be presiding over a literary jury, he said. The idea of leaving Cuba so early in the day didn't please him, and he was fully aware of the difficulties that would have to be surmounted in order to survive two or three days in Nicaragua, but he was glad to have had a chance to collect toothpaste, soap, razor blades, and toilet paper as presents for his friends there.

d. ehrenberg

I managed to bring up the subject of the work camps—the so-called reëducation camps, where in the mid-sixties, at the height of repression of homosexuals in Cuba, homosexuals were imprisoned.

According to my information, the problem of homosexuals was always linked in revolutionary morality and political analysis to the relations existing between prostitution and corruption which were controlled by the United States' East Coast Mafia. At first, only prostitutes were reëducated, but this led the leaders to think that homosexuality was also correctible through reëducation. There was a great deal of ignorance and a certain amount of machismo among the leaders, who were still afraid of the hippie revolt of the sixties. The Revolution hadn't yet succeeded in creating developmental structures for Cuban young people who had lived in a climate of prostitution created by the United States Mafia. Two years of persecution had been organized by a government minister, and the minister himself had subsequently been accused of being a repressed homosexual. Homosexuals were arrested in the streets or seized from their homes, were tried, and then were sent to reëducation camps. They were humiliated, pawed. Even those who had stopped living as homosexuals and had well-established families were seized. Informing surfaced, and the corruption produced by informing; motives were obtaining a place to live, or a job promotion, getting even with someone, envy, and jealousy.

Barnet said he believed that something was done to stop the repression of homosexuals, and he mentioned a letter from the Writers' Union to Fidel Castro.

I asked Barnet if I could acquire a copy of the proceedings of one of those homosexual trials. He said he thought that they had all been burned. Had someone perhaps kept a copy? He knew of no one. He thought Fidel Castro had a lot to do with ending that era, a black page in Cuban history, but, he added, such times of shame exist in all countries. He believed that the Comandante had been unaware of what was going on.

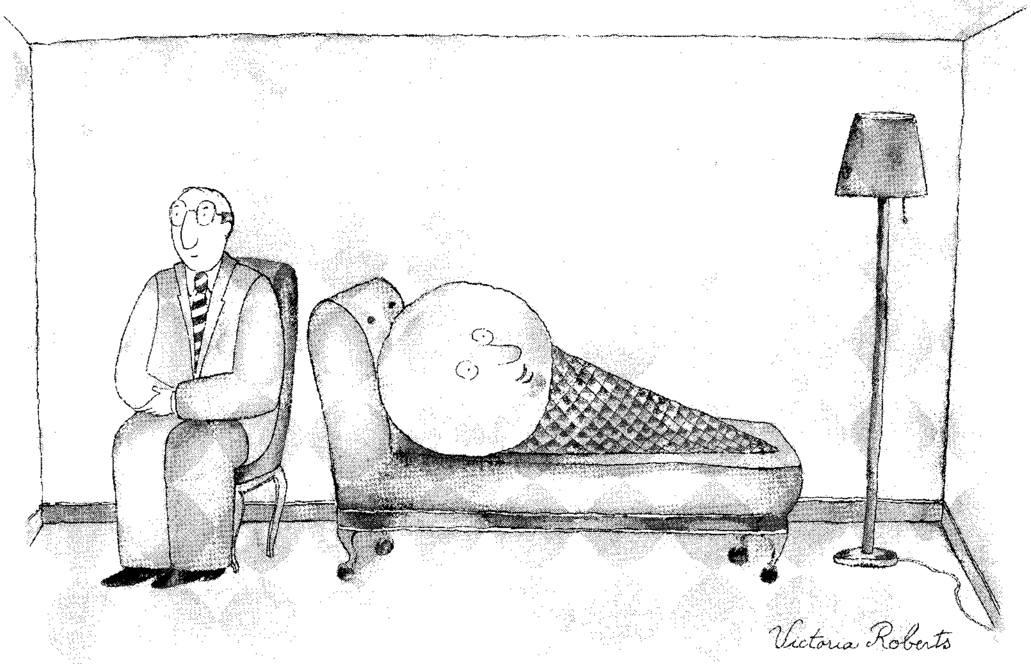
That wasn't the first time I had encountered such a response. Time and again, the Comandante appeared as a strange being whose never-sleeping, penetrating eyes, focussed on Cuba, could discern a school in bad condition in remote Chivirico, on the south coast, but failed to notice the work camps, and had never read a declaration signed in Paris, New York, and Madrid petitioning for the freedom of some homosexual intellectual.

That was as far as Miguel Barnet allowed himself to go. To go beyond that would mean entering the realm of hypocrisy. For one doesn't play around with the Comandante. And thus, seated in the hotel dining room, unable to gaze into Fidel Castro's eyes to guess his mood, what else was Miguel Barnet supposed to say?

Barnet drove ahead in his car to guide me to the home of Pablo Armando Fernández, a poet and the editor-in-chief of a quarterly magazine of the Writers' Union, where we were to meet with a group of writers. It was an old, spacious, clean house, but the curtains and more than one piece of furniture were in fairly urgent need of repair. What had once been a garden bordering the sidewalk in front of the house was totally neglected; taking care of gardens and sidewalks are tasks now assumed mainly by dissidents dismissed from their jobs. The evening was a long one, in which there were several difficult moments.

My meeting with the writers took place at a time when Fidel Castro was obsessed with the changes that were beginning to occur in the Soviet Union. His reaction to the policies that were giving the socialist revolution a new character was a reversion to revolutionary purity, consumer sacrifice, voluntary nonremunerative work. The search for allies led him to Kim Il Sung, and North Korean achievements were praised to the skies in the media. The political scientist Jorge I. Dominguez summed up the situation in *Foreign Affairs:* "Unlike the Soviet Union, most of Eastern Europe, and certainly China, Cuba may be the first communist regime in the late 1980s to back off from market mechanisms in order to improve production and efficiency." I gained the impression, however, that Fidel Castro was moving toward a kind of cultural revolution, rather than simply addressing an economic problem, and that his response imposes on Cubans who must remain within the political framework of the regime in order to survive with minimal decency an absolutist, revolutionary line—a line that was deftly sounded by the writers I met that evening.

An obligatory subject was the misery in which the Cuban population lived—the collective impossibility of satisfying minimal needs. The answer I had already received time and again was thrown at me once more that night: the shortages were the result of the United States' imperialist blockade. Though I am convinced that it would favor specific United States interests to establish normal relations with Cuba, and not to interfere in its internal affairs, I couldn't agree that a country able to trade with almost the entire world, the sole exception among the great powers being the United States, was incapable of organizing its economy and making it possible for its fertile soil, which receives generous rainfall, to produce food. Besides, I refused to accept the concept of Cuba's being fenced in or blockaded in the sense they were trying to give it. Cuba was not fenced in or blockaded; all its foreign channels of communication were open.



"In this dream I am flavor of the month, and double-chocolate-fudge ripple doesn't scare me."

The difficult moments that evening sprang mainly from the assembled intellectuals' total ignorance of world events. I expressed my surprise that postrevolutionary Cuba, having been in existence for almost thirty years, had not produced a literature. This gap, in my opinion, resulted not from a lack of freedom of expression, from censorship, or from the uprooting caused by exile but, rather, from the automatic obligation or compulsion that its writers felt to identify everything with the present situation of Cuba instead of with the much vaster realm that was simply the human condition. What was lacking was one generation, or perhaps just one writer, who didn't view the Cuban hell and the hell of exile strictly within a schematic, political framework, or who could propose and succeed in initiating a nonconfrontational dialogue between the two Cubas—Cuba the island and the Cuba of the exiles, in Miami. Intellectuals were needed who could shift back and forth naturally.

Though relationships between Cubans on the island and Cubans in Miami had ceased being exclusively terrorist or insulting some time earlier—the term *gusanos*, or "worms," which had been applied to those in exile, had disappeared from the Cuban press—the writers I spoke to refused to accept my statement that the Cuban identity of the refugees in the United States was more vigorous and dynamic than that which I had encountered in Cuba itself. Cuban literature, in the best Cuban tradition, I predicted, would emerge in Miami or New York sooner than on the island of Cuba. And it would emerge not as a political position evolving from the field of culture but as a non-Manichean understanding of Cuban identity, to which Castro's Revolution was not the most significant contribution.

True blasphemy.

The writers responded vigorously. Their response, addressed largely to each other, consisted of the classical arguments of what a writer's role in a revolutionary society should be—arguments reiterated through the years, translated from the fundamentalist Soviet terminology into fluent Caribbean Spanish.

AT the time of my visit, the boldest and best writers either had died or had departed into exile after enduring betrayals and persecutions from some of the very individuals drinking rum with me at the home of Pablo Armando Fernández. Of the three best stylists of the Spanish novel in Latin America of this century, two, in my opinion, were Cuban: Alejo Carpentier and the poet and novelist José Lezama Lima, who died in 1986. (Juan Rulfo, the Mexican, was the third.)

Alejo Carpentier had also died. During his lifetime—1904 to 1980—he maintained an almost complicit silence on the subject of politics. The official culture could extrapolate material from his speeches, interviews, and lectures to deify the Revolution, to endow it with a patina of civilization and intellectuality. But a different reading of Carpentier's words was possible, which served many as an extra lung, to prevent suffocation, or as consolation. In an article on Leo Tolstoy's vogue in Latin America, Carpentier recommended that Cuban writers use "War and Peace" as a model in recounting the events that had occurred on the revolutionary island. "What interested me, in this instance, was the method applied by the Russian novelist in his work of reconstructing events, then presenting them with utter freedom," he wrote.

Alejo Carpentier emerged from Surrealism. He wrote extensively in French, and his hermetic, baroque novels were virtually incomprehensible to the Cuban public. In his own way, he served everyone—including the government, for he maintained an uncritical loyalty to Castroism. But because he enjoyed broad thematic freedom the entire development of modern culture could be traced in his writings and lectures. He was an open window—the only one, I believe, in Castro's Cuba—

giving onto the artistic vanguards of the twentieth century. In a speech sixteen years after the Revolution—in 1975, the "Year of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba"—he dared to explain the journalist's role citing Victor Hugo, Émile Zola, and Anatole France, and not once mentioning the Cuban or the Soviet press.

No other writer in Castro's Cuba would speak, as Carpentier did, of a reality beyond the real, quoting Apollinaire: "The beauty of the real that is more real than the real." And Carpentier added, "That is, the reality hidden behind everyday observed reality." This was indeed a blasphemy against socialist realism, a demolition of the theology, imposed by the upper political echelons, that held that nothing was more evidently real than the reality presented in the Party line.

For nearly a quarter of a century, one could read between the lines of Alejo Carpentier and ignore his political opinions, his obsequiousness toward the regime. But to incorporate into his writing what one found between the lines meant that he had had to organize a dual existence. To no one else did the regime grant the implicit cultural freedom enjoyed by Carpentier. A decade after his death, that place remains vacant. Meanwhile, other writers, such as Heberto Padilla, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Carlos Franqui, and Severo Sarduy, found themselves forced to leave the country.

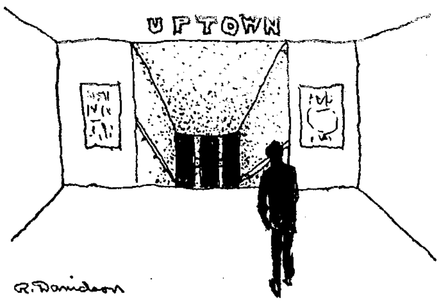
What could I expect from these writers who had remained, and who had been entrusted with the task of holding a discussion with me? Even if they didn't deviate from the Party line in what they wrote and published, their mere desire to read contemporary literature constituted a challenge to the regime, a confrontation with those who decreed the official aesthetic of the Revolution.

In 1987, Cuba had been at war in Angola for twelve years; hundreds of thousands of Cubans must have participated in that carnage, yet for Cuba's writers the subject of war had been reduced to a political matter, and had failed to inspire them as men of culture. The long war had stirred no thematic revolution, no revision of values, no emotional upheaval.

It might be thought impossible for the literature of a society that undergoes years of war not to express the great themes of death and fear. But Cuba had undergone twelve years of war and had produced no war literature, not one novel or poem that goes beyond pamphleteering—not even an inch further. To expect me to accept the rationalization that this lacuna exists because no Cuban writer would risk jeopardizing Angola's freedom by his revelations was too much, though I come from a country where Eva Perón was once officially declared Spiritual Leader of the Nation.

In the afterword to his novel "Heroes Are Grazing in My Garden" the exiled Heberto Padilla says of the work, which he wrote while he was still in Cuba, "The fates of these characters, as well as the situations they are involved in, are inconclusive, because everything written in a suffocating political atmosphere is inconclusive and fragmentary." That evening, I had with me a group of fragmented, inconclusive characters. I'm waiting expectantly to see them again after Castro is gone, when they can comb through newpapers and magazines of the fifties and discover for themselves that Batista's defeat had been achieved in the cities of the plains, in students' and workers' strikes, and not in the Sierra Maestra; when they will be able to reread the publications of the three decades following the night that Fulgencio Batista escaped from the island, and thereby confirm the degradation they were subjected to; and when they are, perhaps, able to reread their writing and then to rewrite, using the same material but feeling free to organize it spontaneously, fearlessly.

On February 24, 1965, in Algeria, in a theoretical discussion of Third World revolutionary strategy, Che Guevara spoke as the Cuban delegate before the economic seminar of the Organization of Solidarity with African and Asian Peoples. He developed the thesis that would become the rope now hanging Fidel Castro; namely, that rich Communist countries ought to subsidize poorer nations that are in the process of organizing their own Communist systems. (Had he lived twenty years longer, he would have discovered that the Communist nations he regarded as rich weren't in a position to feed their own citizens.)



The Cuban Revolution was six years old and, as was clearly evident by then, was unable to organize an economy that could provide the nation with basic necessities. Che thought that the solution lay in instilling in the Soviet Union a new theoretical approach to Marxist revolutions that would surely break out in the Third World over the next couple of decades. Fidel Castro, more pragmatic, realized that the Soviet bureaucracy was unenthusiastic about guerrilla romanticism and was more inclined to launch satellites than to launch revolutions, and that his government's inner circle was not immune to the personality cult that had presumably been buried a decade earlier in Khrushchev's speech on Stalin's crimes. That was Che's last act as a leader of the Castro Revolution. Shortly afterward, he renounced Cuban citizenship, and in April, 1965, he disappeared. A few days later, when correspondents questioned Fidel Castro about Che's fate, he replied, "Comandante Guevara is where he is most useful to the Revolution."

We later learned, of course, that he was in Bolivia, and he was unsuccessful in lighting the fuse of revolution there. Bolivia was not a Vietnam. Che died in the guerrilla adventure, but, in his own way, he had pointed out the trail that Fidel Castro was to follow and adopt without acknowledging as much: living at the expense of other Communist nations. Doing that didn't necessitate modifying revolutionary theories. On the contrary, those other nations had to be assured, in endless speeches, that the Soviet Union and its allies continued to be the revolutionary advance guard, that subsidizing the island was part of a Kremlin-run global strategy.

Castro was unable to conceive that a mere two decades later the Soviet Union would abandon its role as revolutionary advance guard (a role that was in any case more declamatory than actual) to become tolerant of a market economy, of corporate profit, of the need to allow for unemployment even in a planned economy. Considering the speed with which transcendent changes are occurring in the Soviet Union, Castro's continuing refusal to change his strategy is recklessly and suicidally naïve. The Soviet Union is facing much graver problems than the presumed loss of a Marxist revolution ninety miles from the United States. And, obviously, to solve these problems collaboration with the United States is much more necessary to the Soviet Union than Castro's rhetoric.

In 1989, after Gorbachev informed him that there could be limitations on Soviet aid, Castro announced, apocalyptically, "If one day we awake to the news that the Soviet Union has disintegrated—something we hope never occurs—Cuba and the Revolution will continue to resist." (That same year, he banned distribution in Cuba of the two most popular Soviet magazines appearing in Spanish: the weekly *Novedades de Moscú* and the monthly *Sputnik.*)

Old members of the Cuban Communist Party are extremely leery about entering the dead-end street implicit in Fidel Castro's irresponsible rhetoric. In 1991, when Moscow will begin to pay only the market price for the sugar it buys, and charge the going international market prices for oil, the Soviet Union will have accomplished what the United States government has been unable to do in thirty years of diplomacy, crimes, espionage, aggressive acts, and stupidity: the definitive bankruptcy of the Castro regime.

When I was in Cuba, Vice-President Rodríguez told me that *perestroika* had still not proved that it could yield positive results, and that that was why Cuba preferred its own process—its policy of Rectification of Errors. He also said that although *glasnost* was possible in a country unthreatened by foreign dangers—feasible, perhaps, on the Black Sea—it could never succeed in the Caribbean, less than a hundred miles from the United States. Every day, one reads in the newspapers, hears on radio and television and in proclamations read in all the schools, that Cuba is prepared to repel a United States invasion, and never is there any mention of the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement after the 1962 Missile Crisis, thus far respected by the two powers, guaranteeing Cuba's territorial integrity.

In 1986, Castro announced the poli-

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cy for Rectification of Errors, a program designed to return Cuba to planning based on "ideology" and "the leadership of the Party" and to root out corruption. The policy has evolved since then through various speeches, and I have been trying to figure it out. The Comandante's verbiage is beyond description. The hidden reasons for it, I suspect, can't be explained by political analysis but must be seen as a kind of mental upheaval, having to do with the psychological relationship between Fidel Castro and other human beings. (I'm reminded of an old Castro speech, made on the anniversary of the uprising against Batista in the city of Cienfuegos: "The Cienfuegos of yesterday was enthusiastic, revolutionary, brave, and heroic; but the Cienfuegos of today—and who is unaware of this?—is a Cienfuegos that's *very* enthusiastic, *very* revolutionary, brave, and heroic.") Fidel Castro produces several of these statements every day, and believes, and is assured by his friends, that he's creating a new kind of revolutionary consciousness. When you go from city to city, from group to group, from person to person, it becomes clear that his rhetoric has emptied the consciousness of the Cuban people, and filled it up instead with a stifling collective paranoia. What remains—which is to say, acceptance, vacillation, informing—is at the service of repression. The campaign for Rectification of Errors is not self-criticism; it's an autopsy. As Castro himself has put it, "we must correct the errors we made in correcting our errors."

The endless labyrinth created by Castro out of the errors committed and the errors about to be committed becomes, in practice, a great, nasty, relentless settling of accounts—an explosive addition to the intrigues that characterize the whole state apparatus. The aim of the Rectification campaign is not the reform—even within Socialism—of a system that isn't working, nor is it the replacement of a decrepit leadership, which is what Eastern Europe is attempting to achieve. The Rectification of Errors is looking for culprits of the disastrous situation the people are living in, and is developing into a huge protective maneuver for the Comandante and his friends.

This aim perhaps explains why Castro himself emerges in all his speeches as the initiator of the Rectification of Errors. Some examples:

> A total laxity, a chaos that has become truly disturbing, which is why I said it must begin to be rectified.

> I have a great conception of our youth. . . . I shall be very critical, but I also know how to be fair.

And, on the subject of education:

> Here the contradiction between the system of promotion and the quality of teaching became apparent: it became apparent that the criterion of promotion had prevailed, and I in fact had warned against this many times; there must be at least eight or ten speeches where I expressed the phrase "*promotion with quality*."

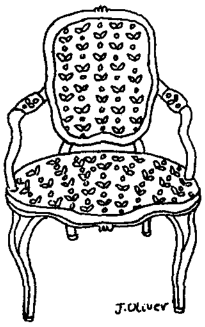
Those who marvel at the number of matriculating university students in Cuba would do well to read a 1987 speech by Castro on education, in which he again emphasizes that quantitative indexes mean nothing in the presence of low-quality teaching, professor absenteeism, and laziness and lack of discipline on the students' part. As for the condition of Cuban medicine, medical volunteers from the United States, Latin America, and Western Europe who had to perform alongside Cuban doctors in Nicaragua can attest that their medical knowledge is at a very low level. Fidel and his brother, Raúl, his deputy and designated successor, like to say that they are informed of everything going on, but that they occasionally forgive certain weaknesses in an attempt to save a good but misguided revolutionary. In a dispatch sent from Havana, Ernesto González Bermejo, the executive editor of the leftist weekly newspaper *Brecha* ("The Breach"), of Montevideo, Uruguay, tells of a curious report that Raúl Castro made about General Arnaldo Ochoa, who, in 1989, was shot as a drug trafficker: the gist of his report, to the Tribunal of Honor of the Armed Forces of Cuba, was that "Since 1970, irregularities have been noticed in Ochoa's behavior. Apparently he always managed to extricate himself with an explanation or a joke in the absence of an institutional mechanism that required an objective accounting of his actions, going beyond a friendly or hostile relationship with his superiors." For nineteen years, a period during which General Ochoa was proclaimed Hero of the Republic, was named Commander of the Cuban Army in Angola, and was rewarded with the highest honors and benefits, he managed to extricate himself from difficulties with an explanation or a joke.

A month before my arrival, Castro detailed the charges against the popular political leader Luis Orlando Domínguez, who had been arrested a few days earlier, in a television message that went on for four and a half hours.

I tried to understand the situation.

Castro was charging a man who had headed the Union of Young Communists for years and then had become his personal protégé, participating in confidential debates in the leader's inner Cabinet, known as the Team for Coördination and Support. Seldom had Castro shown greater confidence in any man. Finally, in June, 1986, Domínguez was appointed president of the Civil Aeronautics Institute of Cuba (I.A.C.C.). But a year later, on reviewing Domínguez's life, the Comandante reported in some detail that all the tasks his protégé performed had been done wrong. And to show his constant state of vigilance Castro didn't fail to mention that during those years there had been considerable strong criticism of Domínguez's conduct within the team "regarding participation in voluntary work, whether or not he was meeting with colleagues, incidents revealing a certain insensitivity on his part—problems not of the same nature as would subsequently arise." With equal naturalness, Castro went on to explain that ever since November 12, 1985, accusations had been raised against Domínguez, but that he himself had trusted Domínguez's word—that the accusations had all sounded like misinterpretations. A year and a half later, bank accounts in Domínguez's name showed up abroad, and so did thousands of dollars in cash kept in his own home, other homes and a beach house that he had acquired for himself and members of his family, luxury automobiles that he had authorized the purchase of for himself and members of his family—all evidence of a frivolous, dissipated life.

How could an official prominent in public life secretly remodel homes in Havana and a beach house outside the city when in order to obtain a brick in Cuba an application must be filled out? How could he secretly engage architects, have professionals draw up plans, have crews of workers appear, get trucks, cement, and furniture, and induce city officials to approve the changes—all this without someone's breathing a word to some relative, friend, or neighbor? How could Domínguez and his family, and his wife's family, lead a frivolous, dissolute life in secret? It was impossible to find any halfway acceptable explanation, so I simply waited for the trial.



After Castro's long speech of accusation and the magnitude of the charges he raised against Domínguez, I was surprised that the trial didn't arouse greater interest in the communications media, in conversations, in foreign correspondents' reports. I asked a lawyer about it—a state functionary, like all lawyers—and he assured me that the trial would be oral and public. Foreign correspondents advised me not to show up at the courtroom, for the seats would all be filled by the time I arrived.

The trial began on Friday, August 28, 1987, and the seats were in fact all filled. I thought that further details of the accusations or some presentation of the defense would appear in *Granma*, since Castro had given the matter such importance. On the day of the trial, there was just a twelve-line announcement saying where the trial would take place and naming the lawyers.

On Saturday, *Granma* devoted twenty-five lines to the trial, and the only new development was that Luis Orlando Domínguez and two accomplices had confessed to all the crimes. On Monday, on page 1 of *Granma*, a thirty-eight-line announcement stated that twenty-two witnesses confirmed Fidel Castro's accusations; that the prosecutor thought that the trial didn't need other witnesses, and the lawyers for the defense concurred; and that Domínguez was sentenced to twenty years in jail.

I was never able to learn what his statement had been, whether he had named other government members, whether he had explained the procedure he employed to get scores of functionaries and workers to incur risks solely in order to gratify his wishes. As for the defense lawyers, more than one friend told me that their sole mission was to appeal for clemency—never to look for extenuating circumstances.

Like the Cubans, I remained in the dark, my knowledge of the Domínguez affair limited to the information on the subject which was provided on television by the Comandante.

Two years after Domínguez's trial, his replacement at the Civil Aeronautics Institute was removed from office and tried. The institute was an important part of the trafficking of drugs by air from Colombia to the island beaches, and from there in fast boats to Miami.

IN many respects, but especially in the field of drug trafficking, Fidel Castro always enjoyed a credibility far greater than that of the United States government. In 1985, Washington tried to convert the relationship between Cuba and the Colombian cartel into a cause célèbre, but the effort made little headway in circles held to be well informed on the subject of drug trafficking in particular, or Latin America in general.

In any event, the presumed United States fantasy or government maneuver was enough to prompt the scholar Jeffrey Elliot and Representative Mervin Dymally to begin an interview of Castro for their 1986 book "Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the March of History" with a question pertaining to this accusation:

> Mervin Dymally: Allow me to start with the first question. The Secretary of State testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, and an official of the Drug Enforcement Agency and also the Consul of the United States Embassy in Mexico said last week that they are relying on evidence of an existent drug relationship between Cuba and Colombia.
>
> Fidel Castro: There's a commandment of God's law that says "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." The present United States Administration ought to be constantly reminded of that. Besides, I believe that the people and Con-

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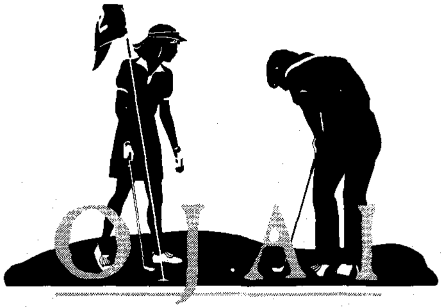

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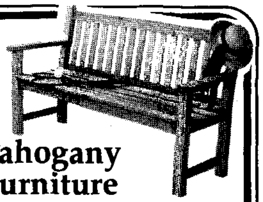

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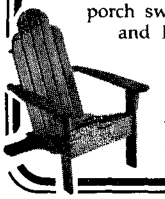

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> gress of the United States deserve more respect.
>
> It's absolutely impossible for the United States and the Department of State to have a single shred of evidence of this kind; I believe that these are truly foul, infamous methods, a dishonest form of foreign policy.

In 1989, four years after Washington's accusations, the General Ochoa scandal burst forth: some of the most prominent members of Cuba's armed forces and its Ministry of the Interior were, we were told by the Comandante himself, linked to the Medellín drug cartel. In July, Ochoa and three others were executed after being found guilty by a military court-martial of drug smuggling. Ten other defendants were found guilty of lesser crimes and received jail terms of ten to thirty years.

No one, of course, believes it possible for Cuba's armed forces and security organs to function as distributors of Colombian drugs without the Castro brothers' participation. Gradually—or perhaps rapidly, inasmuch as the Cuban regime is in crisis—the details will come out, but undoubtedly the Cuban government's purpose in its association with the Medellín cartel doesn't differ from the purpose of Peru's Shining Path guerrillas: to provide themselves with dollars through the corruption of bourgeois society.

This introduces a new element into the debate regarding the road that Cuba might take in a peaceful transition toward coexistence, both at home and abroad. For the reforms to begin from the top seems an increasingly remote possibility. It's hard to imagine that the Castro brothers and the current leaders might feel sure enough of their survival to take even small steps to that end, such as granting a limited amnesty for political prisoners who have already completed half their sentence, or allowing a glimmer of freedom of the press, or introducing reforms in the penal code to make a defendant's coerced confession insufficient proof of guilt, or permitting the private practice of law, so that the accused could have recourse to defense by other than state officials, or sanctioning food production by the private sector, through small farmers.

I MET a young dissident journalist named Rolando Cartaya. We sat on the terrace of the Hotel Presidente, two hundred yards from the sea. It was August, 1987.

Cartaya had arrived loaded with documents, articles he had written for the evening newspaper *Juventud Rebelde*, and amusing accounts of his current profession (pest control for private gardens), of his dismissal from the newspaper, of prison. He told me he hoped to be allowed to leave Cuba. (He eventually succeeded.) But Cartaya's real story, I believe, is a different one—not just a routine episode of a journalist criticized for an article and losing his job rather than surrender his dignity.

I read about ten of Cartaya's pieces, most of which dealt with cultural themes. There was an excellent review of a Vivaldi concert, and there were interviews with musicians and actors such as the Italian Luigi Nonno, the Brazilian Chico Buarque, the Argentine Nacha Guevara, and the Cuban Silvio Rodríguez. In all his articles Cartaya revealed an exquisite sensibility, a true feeling for his themes: he was taking an emotional stand, using rich, fertile language that went beyond political slogans. But he wasn't straying from the official ideology. His future as a journalist and, perhaps, a writer, was assured in Cuba. A characteristic article began:

> One of the distinctive characteristics in Silvio Rodríguez's work—determined by the author's personality, which in turn has been conditioned by experiences amidst the revolution—is the presence of dialectics. Immersed in a historic moment of multiple antagonisms, ranging from confrontation between coexisting social systems to the sometimes agonizing processes experienced by the individual in a phase of radical changes, the singer always aims in his songs toward an infusion of that struggle of opposites which definitively gives a sense of historical process.

Nothing there that the official censors could object to.

In a review of the song "Soy Snob" ("I'm a Snob"), by Nacha Guevara, with lyrics from the French musician Boris Vian, Cartaya wrote:

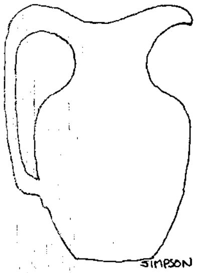
> Snobbism is a social by-product generated in capitalism by the cultural industry. The mass media draw the attention of a mass population with limited economic power to a range of standards of behavior, style, and priorities that are unattainable or at best untenable; standards veering from extravagant to superfluous and forming part of the phenomenon of rising expectations, of the dream mechanism that secures the establishment and simultaneously produces super-earnings.

Nothing objectionable.

Rolando Cartaya was young, had a good job, a place to live, a family, a revolution. And he had Fidel.

But one day, by chance, he attended

another performance—the police repression of a group of Cubans trying to seek asylum in a Latin-American embassy. Cartaya was politically prepared to avow that no Cuban ought to abandon the Revolution. He wholeheartedly agreed that those uprooted, marginal Cubans should be prevented from taking asylum in an embassy. But something broke inside him when he was confronted with the ferocity of actual political repression: the bloody beating that defenseless men, women, and children were subjected to; the gratuitous repression of a group posing no threat to the police.



He wrote his article, which was rejected at *Juventud Rebelde* with a serious warning. Some time later, he wrote a letter to an international news agency about the repression. The letter was discovered before Cartaya could send it, and he spent two years in jail.

He didn't take back his words when he lost his job, when he was persecuted, when food became scarce at home. That is why I think that Cartaya's real story must be the one detailing the feelings and ideas that incited the sudden, dizzying act of conscience.

Cartaya explained it to me in his own way: he was reared a Catholic; it was a reflex act of Christian piety toward one's neighbor. I reminded him that I myself was from a country where many of the Catholic bishops supported and blessed the torturers and murderers of a military dictatorship, comforted and justified them—a country where torturers and murderers were alike Catholic.

Besides, an act of piety differs from taking a defiant stand. An act of piety can be merely a silent moral crisis. The great majority of the Cubans, after all, are undergoing a silent, uncommitted crisis of conscience. Rolando Cartaya went beyond that.

And what Cartaya stands for is what is hard to find in Cubans. They have internalized their fear of the regime in such a way that they will seldom say that the regime itself must totally change—in fact, that it must disappear, collapse. It is almost impossible for them to give free rein to that normal human feeling of wanting everything to end at a stroke, to change radically. They did say it once, in the period before Batista's flight, in the final year of the revolutionary struggle: "Let the accursed year of 1958 end once and for all." But at present there is a boundary that Cubans do not cross: it leads to the territory occupied by the Comandante and his regime.

I am still unable to decipher the geography of Cartaya's decision. How can I place myself in his universe? The religious explanation is inconclusive in a country where religion is barely a varnish for pre-Christian myths and beliefs that are more mysterious and more binding than Christianity.

My reason for dwelling on this unknown quantity in Cartaya is that it may hold the key to what will suddenly, inevitably occur in Cuba: the collapse of the Castro Revolution. Will it break at the top? Will it explode from the bottom? What sort of hidden movements are going on in the Cuban spirit—what hidden anxiety which isn't yet erupting within the inner geography of the regime? What is going on deep inside the Cubans who decide to take a stand on a few small things while postponing all the rest, as they patiently survive by standing in food lines and take refuge in music and dance, in sensuality, in the warm weather, in the sea?

Being with Cartaya was pleasant—listening to his conversation, which was free of sanctimonious declamation, that infernal noise employed by the regime to confuse so many Cubans and beguile so many foreign observers. He was a curious, well-bred young man who, without malice or egotism, had decided to come to grips with something that had suddenly befallen him. I was moved by his loyalty to the facts—to the dreadful injustice he witnessed by accident. But in order to get a clear answer to my questions I must wait for the Cuban people to raise these questions on their own, and answer them for themselves. —JACOBO TIMERMAN

(*Translated, from the Spanish, by Toby Talbot.*)

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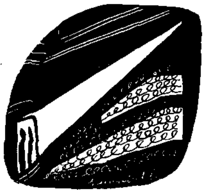
THE CURRENT CINEMA

No Kind of Story



MOVIES about jazz tend to be labors of love, undertaken because a filmmaker wants to convey the pleasure the music has given him and to pay homage to the musicians. And there's no doubt that Spike Lee cares about jazz. In the companion volume to his new film, "Mo' Better Blues," he writes that jazz is "the music I grew up with . . . the music I feel closest to." He decided to make this picture, he says, after seeing (and hating) Clint Eastwood's "Bird" and then reading that Woody Allen was planning a jazz film: "Now, wait a minute! First Clint Eastwood, and now Woody Allen! You know I couldn't let Woody Allen do a jazz film before I did. I was on a mission." "Mo' Better Blues" demonstrates that Spike Lee can make a better jazz movie than Clint Eastwood and get it on the screen faster than Woody Allen; it also demonstrates that this sort of mission—to outdo other filmmakers—isn't necessarily a good enough reason to make a movie. Lee wins the cutting contest with Eastwood on film sense and flashy technique, but it's not much of a victory: the movie is all notions and no shape—hard, fierce blowing, rather than real music. Roy Eldridge, the great trumpet player of the swing era, once described his early style this way: "I was a young cat, and I was very fast, but I wasn't telling no kind of story." That's what Lee's work in this picture is like.

The hero of "Mo' Better Blues" is a fictional trumpeter named Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington), who leads a quintet that plays nightly at a swanky Manhattan club called Beneath the Underdog (after the title of Charles Mingus's autobiography). He has two girlfriends—one a teacher, Indigo (Joie Lee), and the other an aspiring singer, Clarke (Cynda Williams)—and each, early in the movie, characterizes him by saying, "You don't know what you want." Bleek protests, "I know what I want. My music! Everything else is secondary." And this response places him squarely in the tradition of obsessive, single-minded movie jazz musicians, like the ones played by Kirk Douglas in "Young Man with a Horn" and Robert De Niro in "New York, New York." The movie is designed to force this introspective artist into establishing more constructive relations with other people—to get him out of his own head and into the real world. Lee's script presents Bleek with a series of choices, about his love life, his artistic life, and the connections between them. The structure is conventional, but that's all right: a movie about an artist, in any field, is almost obliged to deal with the intensity of his or her dedication to craft, the necessary self-absorption that often leaves others out in the cold. The problem with "Mo' Better Blues" is that Lee doesn't frame Bleek's choices so that we know what's at stake. For example, he avoids imposing the usual good-girl/bad-girl symbolism on his hero's romantic dilemma, but he doesn't do much to distinguish the two women from each other. Far from it. In one of the picture's showpiece scenes, Bleek becomes confused about whether he's making love to Indigo or to Clarke, and Lee cuts from Bleek's face to Clarke's, then Indigo's, then Clarke's again, and so on, showing the women reacting to him in the same way, and often using the same language. The scene is meant to express Bleek's inability to tell the difference between his two lovers; the film itself, however, seems to be turning them into a single, generic Woman.

This fancy sequence follows a scene in which Indigo and Clarke have both turned up, in identical red dresses, to hear Bleek play at Beneath the Underdog. (The dresses, of course, are presents from Bleek: he doesn't bother to pick out different gifts.) The picture is half over, and this is the first time we're told that the hero's girlfriends have known about each other all along. (The way the film is edited, most viewers will have assumed that Bleek was simply lying to both of them.) That's a crucial piece of information: without it, we can't possibly understand the behavior of the characters—especially the women—in the early scenes. What's particularly infuriating about the omission is that Lee has been giving us all sorts of other, purely incidental stuff in the picture's dawdling first hour—little essays on Brooklyn architecture, gratuitous asides on baseball, puzzling closeups of himself (in the role of Giant, the hero's lovable sidekick and inept manager), all of which function only as winks at the audience, reminders that it's old Spike talking to us here. The first voice we hear in "Mo' Better Blues," while the screen is still dark, is that of Flavor Flav, of Public Enemy, saying, "Yo, Spike, start the movie"; later, we hear a snippet of patter from Mister Señor Love Daddy, the d.j. from "Do the Right Thing." Whether you find these touches endearing or self-indulgent, they're no substitute for clarity about the characters' motives.

Lee doesn't seem to have thought through the role of the music in the movie, either. He has set "Mo' Better Blues"—in pointed contrast to other recent movies about jazz—in the present, but his attitude toward the music's relationship to contemporary culture is incoherent. Movies about jazz (like movies about any other kind of music, or, for that matter, about literature or painting) are boring when they're *only* labors of love. We wait patiently as the filmmaker spins his favorite platters for us and hauls out postcards of his idols, and before long we're squirming, eager to get back to our own record collections; such fannish demonstrations of taste are far more interesting to the filmmaker than to the audience. For this sort of project to work as a movie, the music has to be more than music; it has to mean something to the characters in very particular terms—to express something about the culture of a clearly defined specific moment—or else we might as well skip the movie and buy the soundtrack album instead. Cassavetes' "Shadows" used a jazz milieu and a Mingus score to explore, perhaps better than any other work in any medium, the hipster subculture of New York City in the late fifties; the country music of Altman's "Nashville" seemed to evoke everything that was going on in America in 1975; and Scorsese's "New York, New York," for all its flaws, was a real attempt to get at the ways the culture changed in the period after the Second World War, which was also the time when jazz style was making the transition from swing to bebop.

"Mo' Better Blues" makes gestures toward using contemporary jazz this way, but they're halfhearted. Lee, whose father is a jazz musician (and has composed the scores of all his movies), is obviously distressed by the music's relative marginality in today's pop culture. Bleek conducts a running argument with his ambitious saxophone player, Shadow (Wesley Snipes), about what sort of music the band should be playing; Shadow wants to experiment with more popular forms, but Bleek, a diehard classicist, doesn't see why he should play any differently. In his view, it's the audience's fault that jazz doesn't seem to matter as much as it once did; he's especially scornful of the black public, which he accuses of turning its back on its own music. And it's impossible to tell, either from the action or from the music itself, how we're supposed to respond to the hero's attitude. The music of the Bleek Gilliam Quintet—which is actually played by the Branford Marsalis Quintet, with Terence Blanchard as the trumpet soloist—doesn't seem to be in the same style from number to number, so we're never entirely sure what it is that Bleek is meant to be defending. Is his intransigence just another indication of his egotism? And what's the significance, if any, of the band's wardrobe, which mixes contemporary dress with anachronistic touches like berets (à la Monk and Gillespie) and porkpie hats (à la Lester Young)? Is it postmodern born-too-late identity confusion or just hip fetishism? Halfway through, Bleek performs an original composition called "Pop Top 40 R 'n' B Urban Contemporary Easy Listening Funk Love," which parodies several forms of black pop music, including rap and funk, and we have no idea what's going on in this sequence, on any level. The lyrics put down every other form, but Bleek's performance—he's singing and dancing and clowning as well as playing his horn—is exuberant, all out, in marked contrast to his usual quiet intensity; suddenly, he's a real performer, a crowd-pleaser. It's possible that the song is supposed to represent a concession to popular taste in the guise of something else. But if that's what's intended we need to know whether Bleek is aware of what he's doing; the movie doesn't give us a clue. And it glaringly omits any mention of Bleek's relationship to the recording industry. There are covers of Bleek Gilliam albums in his apartment, but we never see a recording session, never see him or his manager negotiating a deal. This is worse than an oversight, since there are several scenes of negotiations with the owners of Beneath the Underdog, a weaselly pair of brothers named Moe and Josh (played by John and Nicholas Turturro); when Lee wants to make a point about white exploitation of black musicians, he goes after a couple of small-timers. (In "Do the Right Thing," economic oppression was represented by an independent pizza-parlor owner, not by one of the fast-food chains.)

Washington really has to struggle to make sense of his character. It's great to see him in a role as large as his talent deserves, and his magnetism and his intelligence keep the movie watchable even during its most aimless stretches, but the script doesn't allow him to shape the performance. The movie builds to a climactic scene in which Bleek's face is smashed in while he's trying to protect Giant from a couple of goons: his lips, which are his livelihood, are ruined, and he has to rethink what his life is all about. (In an earlier scene, he has said that if he didn't have his music he'd "curl up and die.") But he has to do it wordlessly, in brief shots, because most of the rest of the movie is montage. In one of the few fully dramatized scenes in the last section of the picture, he goes to a club where his old band is playing, now with Shadow as its leader and Clarke as its featured singer, and gets up on the bandstand with his horn. As he approaches the stage, we wonder if this is the first time he has played in public since the fight, and then, when he starts to blow and the notes won't come out, we wonder if this is the first time he has played at all. The idea is dumbfounding: we can't believe that this proud, conscientious musician would get up in front of a crowd, after a long absence, without being absolutely sure he still had his chops. Afterward, he goes to Indigo and persuades her to marry him, and the rest of his life, including the birth of a son (named Miles) and a move back to the Brooklyn brownstone he grew up in, unfolds as a montage, with John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" on the soundtrack. Everything we've waited for, for two long, meandering hours, goes by in a cleverly edited blur. This is the *hard* part of the hero's life—the stuff that isn't music, and that the movie has been criticizing him for avoiding—and all that Lee gives us is eight minutes of images of domestic bliss, with Coltrane's pretty sounds behind them.

While the movie was being filmed, its working title was "Love Supreme";

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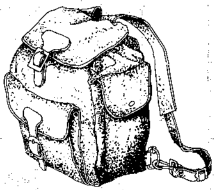

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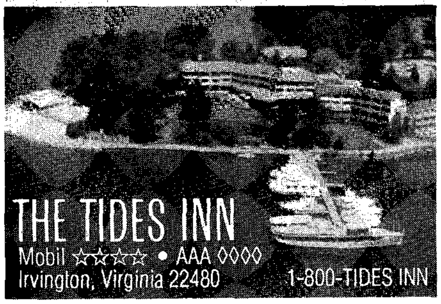

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Lee had to change it when Coltrane's widow withdrew her permission (because of the profanity in the script). As "Mo' Better Blues" dribbles to its evasive conclusion, you may find yourself thinking back on that opening comment by Flavor Flav, and realizing that there *is* a jazz standard whose title would have been perfect for this picture: "I Can't Get Started."

LIKE all good mysteries, Scott Turow's novel "Presumed Innocent" lays cunning, ingeniously designed traps for its readers. Mysteries are intricate games of hide-and-seek, in which the writer reveals pieces of his over-all plan gradually, strategically, and challenges us to outflank him—to divine the true meaning of the ambiguous directions he's giving us, find the concealed path he's trying to divert us from, and sneak up behind him. If we figure out what's going on before he chooses to explain it to us, we've won. It's a seductive form of intellectual play, and the more elaborate the writer's construction is (as in, say, Agatha Christie or John Dickson Carr or Ellery Queen), the more absorbed we're likely to be. It is also, in some sense, a fundamentally literary exercise. The contest is one-on-one, the writer's mind against the reader's, and the real clues are invariably matters of verbal style; once we're familiar with the conventions of the genre and with the author's characteristic voice, we're able to pick out the things that signify, the telling anomalies—a detail suspiciously elided, an atypical turn of phrase, a descriptive passage so thorough that we know it's meant to conceal a single, tiny bit of crucial information within. Movies provide no solitary controlling intelligence for us to pit ourselves against—the novelist's functions are necessarily dispersed among the writer, the director, the editor, the crew, the cast—so we can never be sure whether an odd inflection or facial expression or an unusual way of framing a shot is intended to be significant as a clue. Mysteries are traps for filmmakers, too: the game loses its charm if the audience has to rely on guesswork.

And Turow's book presents special problems. For one thing, it was a tremendous best-seller; millions of people already know whodunit. The director, Alan J. Pakula, has come up with a bizarre solution to this difficulty: the movie is shot (by Gordon Willis) and paced as if it weren't a mystery but a serious character study, an art film. "Presumed Innocent" is lit like "Cries and Whispers," only without the bright-red accents: the movie's palette seems to consist of brown and gray—earnest, business-suit colors. The lunacy of treating this story as a deep exploration of character is that the only thing we really want to know about the character in question—Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), a Midwestern prosecutor accused of murdering one of his colleagues (Greta Scacchi)—is: Did he do it or not? What makes Turow's novel such a tour de force of narrative gamesmanship is that the suspect himself is the storyteller: the mystery reader's task of decoding patterns of revelation and concealment is slipperier, more complex, more tantalizing than usual. Even if all the ambiguities in the hero's voice could somehow be transposed to Harrison Ford's manner on the screen, the movie still wouldn't be able to reproduce the novel's distinctive style of mystification: watching Rusty look cagey and secretive with his wife, his lawyer, his co-workers, and his accusers is far less disturbing than wondering if we can trust what he says in a first-person narration addressed directly to us. The role is probably unplayable. Ford—who has been given a fuzzy crewcut that makes him look like Gunnar Björnstrand—has to drain himself of personality, and maintain a tense, repressed, impenetrable expression throughout the picture.

The supporting cast is luckier. Bonnie Bedelia, as Rusty's nervous, self-deprecating wife, gives lovely shadings to a tough part: both in her big scenes and in ones where she's merely reacting to events around her, she's vivid and real. As the no-nonsense judge presiding over Rusty's murder trial, Paul Winfield provides some sorely needed comedy; his gusto is irresistible. And Raul Julia, as the hero's lawyer, gives his best screen performance. He's an elegant, commanding presence in the courtroom scenes, and they would have very little energy without him. Julia gets his effects simply: by a held gaze, by a slight drop in his voice, and, often, just by his bearing—he wears his impeccably cut suit as if he had been born in it. The actors do their best, but the movie of "Presumed Innocent" is still a dreary, ponderous spectacle; it turns an exciting game into a two-hour slow-motion replay. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

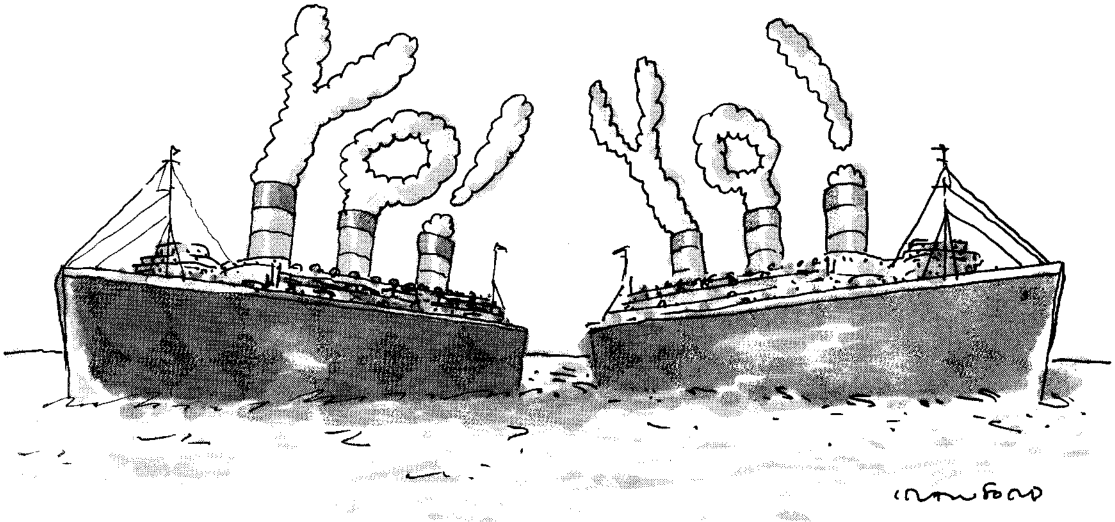
AROUND CITY HALL

Social Notes from the Emerald City

THE Republicans did not carry New York State in the 1988 Presidential election, and their mayoral candidate here went down to defeat last year, so it is understandable that George Bush's visits to the largest city in his domain are relatively rare: like any sensible politician, he'd rather drop in on places where he can count on being welcomed with balloons and fireworks and signs that read "You Led the Way, George!" in commemoration of gratifying local Republican victories. However, the President did stop by the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria for about an hour on the evening of July 24th to speak at a thousand-dollar-a-plate fund-raiser for the state Republican Party. It was his first visit to Manhattan since last October, when he came to town to boost the mayoral candidacy of Rudolph Giuliani, who a few weeks later lost—though narrowly—to David Dinkins. The latest Bush visit came less than two weeks after the formal announcement at City Hall by Democratic National Chairman Ron Brown, standing between Dinkins and New York's Governor Mario Cuomo, that New York had been chosen as the site of the Party's next National Convention. On that occasion, Brown, calling New York "America's most dynamic city," said, "Nominating a world-class leader requires a world-class city and a world-class Convention. That's why we're coming to New York in 1992." The choice of New York, which he called "America's gateway to opportunity and a better life," would, he said, "allow candidates and our party to send a message of hope, empowerment, change and responsibility around the world."

The President and his advisers, as anyone could tell from his Waldorf-Astoria speech, had a different take on the Democrats' selection of New York: they saw it instead as a God-given gateway to political opportunity. Hadn't the Democrats' 1984 choice of San Francisco made it possible for some Republicans to use the term "San Francisco Democrats" as an expletive throughout that year's campaign? And didn't Americans in general see New York as a place where very bad things are constantly happening? In case this sounded like Republican wishful thinking, the President and his men could cite the message of recent smash-hit movies that Americans were paying large amounts of money to see. In last year's "Batman," Gotham City was a landscape of dark menace and crumbling ruins. In "Ghostbusters II," local residents were constantly being engulfed by slime, if not Slime II. Just the last few weeks have seen the openings of "Ghost," in which the New York hero is consigned to his eponymous condition as the result of a savage street attack, and "Quick Change," which shows disheartened New Yorkers beset by an unrelenting series of disasters that are reminiscent of those in Neil Simon's "The Out-of-Towners"—the granddaddy of New York bashers—and which cause the "Quick Change" bashee Bill Murray to resort to the line "God, I hate this town" every few minutes. When Matthew Broderick, in the title role of "The Freshman," asks, soon after his arrival here, "Robbery is still a crime in New York, is it not?" his view of the state of law and order in this city is made to seem as quaint as his sentence structure. After he is financially totalled by a con artist in Grand Central, his comment is "I had been in New York for nineteen minutes and eleven seconds, and I was already ruined."

The President, in his seventeen-minute speech at the July 24th dinner, mentioned the Democratic Convention's coming to New York and called the opposing party's destination "a showcase of liberal politics"—what was on display being, he assured the ballroom crowd, a horror show. In the nineteen-eighties, while the rest of America, under Republican Presidents, was prospering and looking forward to the future, he said, "life in New York—especially in the city—was becoming more expensive, more difficult, and more dangerous than ever before." He described the town in which he was speaking as "a city that lives in fear" while New York liberals—a word he used throughout as a near-expletive, 1988 style—adamantly opposed tough anticrime measures. "Where the liberal mind-set dominates," the President said, "the net result has been the same: bad schools, dangerous streets, big deficits," and also "open-air drug markets" and "these muggings." Although he did not mention the name Mario Cuomo, few at the Waldorf had any doubt that the liberal mind-set he was taking out after was that of New York's Governor, whose name is most frequently mentioned—though never, *never* by Cuomo himself, his only ostensible concern being running this year for a third term in Albany—as the candidate who would give the Democrats their best chance against Bush two years from now. The President's



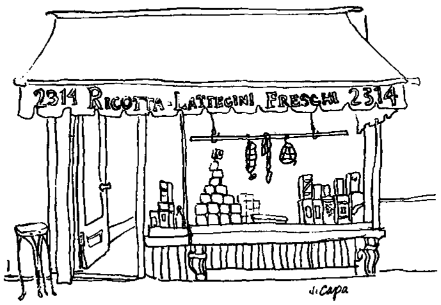
OCEAN LINERS WILL BE OCEAN LINERS

special attention to the dismal condition of this city was assumed to have something to do not only with the certainty that his 1992 opponent can be found guilty of having been nominated here but with the prospect that the chosen candidate may be someone who is guilty of being a native New Yorker. "BORN IN QUEENS. RAISED IN QUEENS. PRACTICED LAW IN QUEENS. STILL LIVES IN QUEENS"—so read the legend beside Cuomo's name on the giant screen next to the scoreboard at Shea Stadium (which is in Queens) when, back in 1983, he attended his first Mets game as governor.

NO one speculated during the Waldorf dinner about what kind of city Bush might have reported finding here if Giuliani, rather than Dinkins, had taken office as mayor last January 1st. The losing mayoral candidate was not on hand for consultation purposes. Giuliani had not been offered a place on the dais, and so had not come at all. Such treatment of a former star Republican candidate might be found instructive by this year's G.O.P. nominee for governor of New York, Pierre Rinfret, the multimillionaire economic consultant whom local Republican leaders finally settled on in May, five days before their state convention, after nineteen other candidates—including Giuliani—had turned down the privilege of running against the popular and rich-in-campaign-funds incumbent. Late in April, a source described in the *Post* as "a top Republican figure with strong White House ties" suggested that the G.O.P. run *nobody* against Cuomo this year, explaining, "Since we don't have a chance, why should we let Mario have the satisfaction of being able to claim a big victory?" Rinfret's place on the dais on July 24th was next to Bush. As the state's putative next governor had put it, "at least I get to sit next to the President." And that was about all he got. Bush did not bother to meet with him personally, although in June there had been a seventy-five-second photo opportunity with Bush at the White House, during which, Rinfret said later, the President had time to urge him to "hit him—and hit him hard." By the time Rinfret spoke at the Waldorf dinner, the President and most of the audience had left.

The fact that Republican candidates in heavily Democratic New York are not a high-attention priority in the White House was demonstrated here last year when, as Bush tried to introduce Giuliani at a G.O.P. dinner, it turned out that he had not bothered to learn how to pronounce his candidate's name. "Giu . . . Ger . . . Giovanni . . . Gerlani" was as close as the President could come. Rinfret (who, a recent poll predicted, would take twenty-one per cent of the vote in the race against Cuomo) might have got similar treatment, but before Bush's trip here last month a Washington reporter dared the Presidential press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, to name Cuomo's Republican opponent. He passed the test but pronounced the name sounding the "t." Told that "Rin-*fray*" was correct, the Kansas-born Fitzwater said firmly, "In Kansas, it has a 't.' "

THE day after the speech in which Bush had laid into New York, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan told reporters in Washington, "Not in the history of the Presidency have such things been said about a city. We don't talk about the People's Republic of China in those terms." The President, he told reporters, had "used the kind of language reserved for the Albanians in the bad old days." Of Bush and his friends' opinion of New Yorkers Moynihan said, "They despise us." New York is not an easy town to insult, however. Despite all the harsh things Bush said about the city in his speech, no account of the event made the front page of any local daily. The *Times* gave the text half a column on an inside page of its Metro section. The preëmptive news in the *Post* was the Reverend Al Sharpton's winding up a fifteen-day sentence (he got five days off for good behavior) for blocking traffic at LaGuardia Airport in 1988 to protest the treatment of blacks in the New York criminal-justice system. Taking up most of the front page was a picture of Sharpton, his hands hanging through the bars of a Rikers Island cell. The headline was "AL-CATRAZ." Shortly before he was released from his cell, he told a *Post* reporter, "I will be back in the streets louder than ever."



The big headline across the front page of *Newsday* on the day after the President's visit was "SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS." Three Brooklyn children—two of them sleeping, one sitting in her mother's lap—were shot dead that week in separate incidents, killed by bullets fired at random or intended for someone else. "People have a tendency to use the amount of power at their disposal," the city's police commissioner, Lee Brown, said. "All too often, we find the power at their disposal turns out to be a gun." Six days after Bush's visit, a fourth child, nine months old, was killed by a semi-automatic pistol, fired seven times through the door of his Bronx apartment, as he sat in his walker. Homicides in the city this year are approaching six a day. Most of them are described at first, almost ritually, as "drug-related." In some cases, it develops that the description is accurate; in many cases—as was apparently true of the killings of the four children—it is not. Nearly all, however, are gun-related. On the day after Bush's visit, Commissioner Brown and Mayor Dinkins called for a national gun-control law—a tough anticrime measure that is supported by many Americans, including liberals, but to which the President and National Rifle Association members are strongly opposed. "Our children are dying. Why and for what?" Dinkins demanded at a press conference that night. "For a principle? For the right to hunt?" No, he said, it was "for the right to express anger by blasting bullets through a steel door." In response to the killings, Senator Alfonse D'Amato urged the House of Representatives to support the death penalty for major drug dealers.

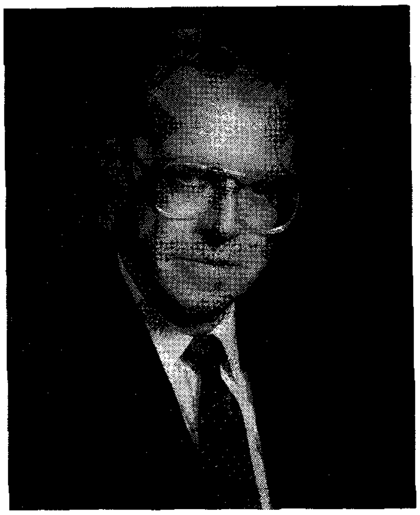
THE Democrats' decision on where to hold their 1992 Convention came down, in the final weeks, to New York versus New Orleans, or, as one local headline put it, "THE BIG APPLE VS. THE BIG EASY." The Louisiana Legislature's passage of the strictest anti-abortion measure in the country (later vetoed by the governor), which could have meant that the meeting hall would be turned into a war zone, undoubtedly helped tip the scales in favor of this city. There is a strong suspicion, however, that the Convention was steered to New York because Chairman Brown wanted it that way. When the announcement was made at City Hall, on July 11th, he referred to the happy prospect of "coming home." Although Brown hasn't lived here in twenty years, he grew up in Harlem, where his father managed the Theresa Hotel, and where he knew Dinkins. Later, Cuomo was one of his professors, at St. John's Law School, which was then in Brooklyn and is now in Queens. The July 11th announcement was made with much pomp and circumstance, before several hundred invited guests. As Brown, Cuomo, and Dinkins led a procession of dignitaries into the ornate City Council chamber, the pomp included the playing of the Marine hymn, in honor of Dinkins, a proud onetime Marine. The presence of the Governor aroused special interest. The day before, a *Times* story out of Washington, by Michael Oreskes, had reported that although Cuomo had been invited, the hope, according to a Dinkins aide, was that he wouldn't come. The general idea was that press questions put to Cuomo about his 1992 intentions would divert the spotlight from the Mayor, who had lobbied heavily to bring the Convention here. The Governor received numerous calls, including one from the Mayor, assuring him that the callers did, too, want him to come. Indeed, some members of the Democratic National Committee were said to be quite eager for the Governor to show up, considering the likely "configuration," as one committee member put it, of wire-service photos of the event if he stayed away. Throughout the July 11th ceremony, there were enthusiastic references to the nice historical coincidence that not only was Dinkins the city's first black mayor but Ron Brown was the first black chairman of the Democratic National Committee. As a black radio reporter put it at City Hall that morning, the Democrats in Washington "didn't want to have just those two blacks guys sitting there" signing the Convention agreement. To complicate matters, the papers were to be signed on the mahogany writing desk—at other times it sits, carefully guarded, in a room at the top of the City Hall rotunda—that was used by President George Washington during the period, which ended two hundred years ago this month, when New York was the nation's capital. And, as another reporter pointed out, "we're talking about old George the slave owner, aren't we?"

Fortunately, the Governor—who said he had never had any intention of not coming—was on hand to be one of the two formal witnesses to the signing of the papers (while a band played "Happy Days Are Here Again"). The other witness was the city's Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development, Sally Hernandez-Pinero. During the ceremony, there were frequent predictions that the Convention would generate a hundred million dollars in economic benefits for New York. Ms. Hernandez-Pinero's presence could also be taken as a signal that in 1992 the concerns of women and of Hispanics would be on the delegates' minds more than they had been at previous National Conventions in this city. Cuomo did not allow press questions about his 1992 intentions to distract from the business at hand, telling reporters, "I have no plans to run for President. I have no plans to make plans. If you guys don't believe me, that's too bad." Everything went smoothly, unless you count the fact that, as Cuomo was speaking, a heckler rose up in the fourth row to denounce him for his position on abortion: that as a Catholic he opposes it but as a public official he has a responsibility to comply with state and federal law.

"This Convention has been hijacked by Mario Cuomo's New York City Democrats, using the blood of aborted babies!" the heckler shouted.

"Let's be honest," Cuomo said as the man was led away. "This would never have happened in New Orleans."

AT the ceremony, the Mayor promised that when the Democrats arrived here they would find New York to be "a glorious pageant of progress." Chances are that Dinkins will be saying the same thing in 1992, no matter what happens. Still, in view of all the recent revolutionary developments around the world, it is a bold person who will predict what things may be like anywhere two years from now. Some of the changes in this city in the last year or so, such as the wholesale shifts at mayoral agencies when one mayor replaces another, have been inevitable. Many other changes have come about more gradually. Thanks to retirements, altered plans, and untimely deaths, New Yorkers, looking



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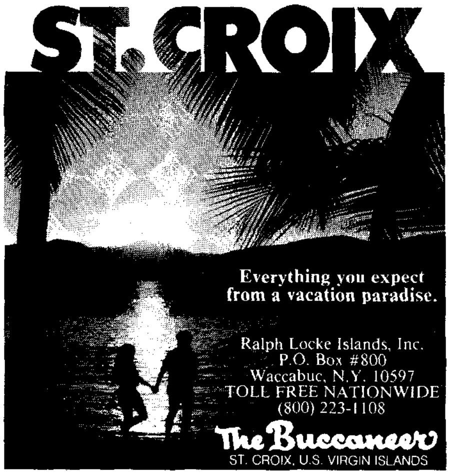

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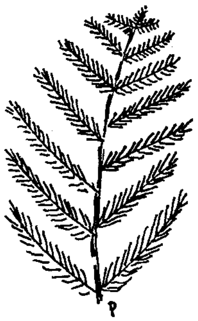
around them, have suddenly discovered that although the scenery and the plot lines are much the same, they are faced with an almost entirely new cast of characters, in government and elsewhere.

Until early this year, when a local resident wanted to cuss out the person in charge of the city's buses and subways, for example, the appropriate name was David Gunn, the head of the New York Transit Authority. During the second week in January, Gunn resigned and was almost immediately replaced by Alan Kiepper, who came here from Houston, where he had been in charge of transportation services. Quite a few of his dissatisfied local customers would like to cuss him out, but, unfortunately, hardly anybody knows his name yet. Since January 2nd, the city school system has had a new chancellor, Joseph Fernandez, who came here from Miami, and presides over a system in which seventy per cent of the students—there are nearly a million—are black or Hispanic. Fernandez is the third Hispanic chancellor, the first having been appointed in 1983. For more than half of last year, the city school board was conducting a nationwide search for a new schools chancellor. Richard Green, New York's first black chancellor, who took office in March, 1988, moved here after holding a similar post in Minneapolis. Though he started out strong, before long he seemed overwhelmed by the effort to cope with the daily disasters of a deeply troubled system: gun-toting first graders; teachers and principals arrested for criminal activity, including crack use; an intransigent school bureaucracy. "IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN" was the headline over one local news column, invoking Kermit the Frog's lament. In May of last year, shortly before Green died, at fifty-two, of a severe asthma attack, a *Newsday* cartoon showed him as Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," over the caption "I don't think we're in Minnesota anymore, Toto."

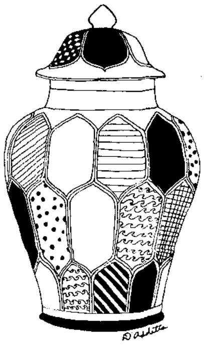


A year ago, the manager of the New York Yankees was another man with Green for a last name—Dallas being the first—to whom Yankee owner George Steinbrenner had made the familiar promise that the job was his for the season. Moving in and out of national baseball headquarters, in Murray Hill, a year ago was A. Bartlett Giamatti, the commissioner of baseball, who was trying to figure out if Pete Rose should be banned, at least temporarily, from the game. Another familiar figure on the local scene last summer was Bishop Paul Moore, of the New York Episcopal Diocese, which has as its center the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. In seventeen years as bishop there, Moore, a tall, white-maned man, had mixed aggressively in local political and ideological controversies and community affairs. Last October—two months after Steinbrenner replaced Dallas (Not Easy Being) Green with Bucky Dent, and a month after Giamatti died of a heart attack, at fifty-one, and was succeeded by his friend Fay Vincent—Moore, having reached retirement age, was succeeded as bishop by Richard Grein, of the Diocese of Kansas. (If death hadn't taken the former schools chancellor, the job of sorting out the Richard Greens and Richard Greins in local headlines would have been formidable.) In contrast with the man he was following, Grein told reporters that he planned to spend much of his time not engaging in public dialogue but attending to diocesan administration. Black leaders in the local Episcopal diocese (of which Dinkins is a member) said they were confident that he would get to know the problems of the city, although there "aren't too many blacks where he comes from." Grein said he expected not to be able to escape the line "I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

Over in the Roman Catholic diocese in Brooklyn, there has also been a change that New Yorkers have had to get used to. "A WARM AND GENTLE BISHOP" was the headline over the *Times* editorial on the impending retirement of Bishop Francis Mugavero, whose approach to his duties and to the people in his diocese was often contrasted with the more flamboyant and confrontational style of John Cardinal O'Connor, across the river in Manhattan. After an auxiliary bishop, Austin Vaughan, announced last February that Governor Cuomo, because of his position on abortion, was in danger of going to Hell, Mugavero, who was Cuomo's bishop, since the Brooklyn diocese includes Queens, said, "We must leave that judgment in the hands of a merciful God." Bishop Thomas Daily, who succeeded Mugavero in April, has said that he would consider excommunicating Catholic politicians with views such as Cuomo's if it would serve "the common good." Daily's last diocese was Palm Beach—a considerable contrast to Brooklyn, which is over half black and Hispanic and is the home of some of New York's poorest citizens. Daily has said that, in Brooklyn, as in Palm Beach, the fight against abortion will be his highest priority.

At the Mayor's end of City Hall, nearly all the faces are different from those that got to be so familiar in the twelve years that Edward Koch was mayor. Of the sixty or so deputy mayors, commissioners, and high-level administrators Dinkins has named, only one is a holdover from the Koch administration—Mary Schmidt Campbell, the city's first black commissioner of cultural affairs, whom Koch appointed in July, 1987, at Dinkins' urging. The theory that Dinkins, a political product of Harlem clubhouses, would make a large number of his appointments from that source proved incorrect. Many of those he has appointed, both black and white, are from other parts of the country. Police Commissioner Brown is from Houston; Dr. Emilio Carrillo, the head of the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation, came here from Boston; Dr. Woodrow Myers, Dinkins' commissioner of health, is from Indianapolis; Allyn Sielaff, the corrections commissioner, is from Cleveland; and Barbara Sabol, the head of the Human Resources Administration, last served in Albany but had spent most of her professional life in Kansas. When she was asked if she expected to have trouble getting on top of the city's immense welfare and social-service problems, she showed that she knew a cue when she heard one. "I know I'm not in Kansas anymore," she said.

No sensible person would turn to the records of baseball managers—particularly Yankee managers—for examples of stability in public life, but Steinbrenner seemed to be out to break a record of his own when, on June 6th, he dismissed Bucky Dent in favor of Stump Merrill, his eighteenth change of Yankee manager in his seventeen years as owner and the third manager in a single year. Long before this, crowds at Yankee Stadium had made it clear that it was someone else's departure they devoutly wished for. The cry "George must go!" was heard nearly every night. On July 30th, they got their wish, when it was announced that Vincent had banned Steinbrenner from any further role in the management of the Yankees, because of his payment last January of forty thousand dollars to a "known gambler," allegedly in return for negative information about Yankee outfielder Dave Winfield, and because of "a pattern of behavior that borders on the bizarre." Calling Steinbrenner baseball's No. 1 bully, a *News* editorial said, "Boys named Fay learn early how to stand up to loud-talking blowhards." When word of Vincent's ruling reached Yankee Stadium, during a Yankee-Tiger game, the fans erupted in a joyful standing ovation. Ten days earlier, Cuomo had announced that if Steinbrenner had to sell the team it might be a good idea if the State of New York bought it, for a quarter of a billion dollars or so; it would be a profitable investment, he suggested. This story broke on the same day as Justice William Brennan's unexpected announcement that he was retiring from the Supreme Court; but it was Cuomo's proposal ("GOV: WE'LL BUY THE YANKS!") that took up the *Post's* front page. The *News* gave the two events equal front-page space, and illustrated the Cuomo headline with a picture of the Governor (who was once an outfielder in the minor leagues) playing ball, wearing a Yankees cap. Steinbrenner suggested that Cuomo, instead of buying the team, should start as the Yankees' next manager. "Yankee Stadium could become Cuomo's field of dreams," said *Newsday*, which pointed out that Cuomo had held the office of governor longer than the terms of the last six Yankee managers combined.



Besides getting used to all the new faces at City Hall and elsewhere, New Yorkers have had to adjust to the striking difference between the Republicans in charge in Washington and those involved in the 1990 G.O.P. election campaign in this state. On the national level, the Republicans are famous for being smugly well organized, discreet, ever mindful of what they call the eleventh commandment ("Never speak ill of another Republican"), and, of course, rich—the result being that they generally end up winners at election time. Pierre Rinfret was nominated by the desperate Republicans in this state only after a district leader found his name in an address book. A substantial part of his appeal was that, if he wanted to, he could afford to fund most of his own campaign. Certainly, the state G.O.P. wasn't in a position to be helpful: it's almost a million dollars in debt. The hope had been that the Bush dinner would be a big financial boost—Cuomo has over eight million dollars in the bank for his campaign—but the audience at the Waldorf was sparse, and the take was about half what was expected. So far as ideology is concerned, the Bush Administration strongly opposes abortion; Rinfret and all the other Republican statewide candidates in this year's New York election support it, and for the first time in history there is a pro-choice plank in the G.O.P. platform. Defying the eleventh commandment, Rinfret has criticized the President's going back on the 1988 no-new-taxes pledge, saying, "The people are getting ripped off." During an interview with *Times* reporters on the day Bush was here, Rinfret was told that no New York gubernatorial candidate in this century had had as little government experience as he had. "Who did Bush nominate today?" he asked. (He didn't know the name; that of David Souter had to be supplied to him.) "They brought this guy out of the blue," he said, and reported that his wife had assured him—apparently with pride—"He's got as little experience as you do." He also pointed out that Ronald Reagan, before being elected governor of California, had been "a movie actor. He wasn't a great movie actor." As for the money problem, he told the *Times* reporters (giving them a glimpse of his decision-making processes) that so far his campaign had raised eight hundred thousand dollars, of which five hundred and forty thousand was his own money—"Everybody said I was going to do it, so I said what the hell, I might as well do it." Among the economic plans he described with enthusiasm was the establishment of a marketplace in Harlem. "The people up in Harlem like being out in the open," he ex-

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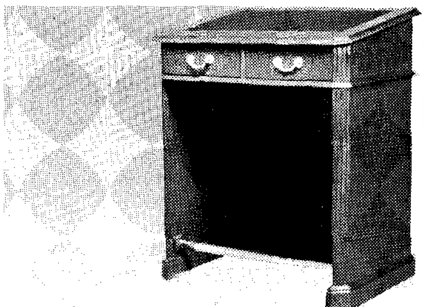

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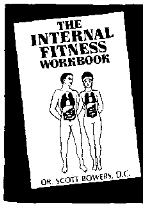

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plained. "Why not capitalize on their life style?"

NOT all New Yorkers greeted the choice of New York for the next Democratic Convention with the ebullience that was on display at City Hall. Bill Reel, a *News* columnist, was offended that the victory had come about, at least to some degree, because of Louisiana's anti-abortion legislation, and he urged local residents, as they congratulated each other, to avert their eyes from "a hundred and fifty thousand tiny lives snuffed out annually in New York abortion mills." His indignation was not bipartisan. Ignoring the pro-choice plank in this year's Republican state platform, he said, "Abortion is apple pie, mom, and baseball to Democrats. It's what the American flag is to Republicans—the preferred symbol of what they stand for." Because of the pro-legalized-abortion implications of the choice, Ray Kerrison, a *Post* columnist, called the projected hundred-million-dollar economic benefit "blood money," and said he was "embarrassed, even ashamed, to call myself a New Yorker." (Letters to the editor a few days later reminded him that he could always move to Louisiana.) Running over a list of local Catholic officials—among them Cuomo, Moynihan, and Representative Charles Rangel—who support abortion rights, Kerrison asked, "Does anyone think any of these politicians would hold their positions if the unborn could vote?" The complaint against the coming Convention from the Reverend Al Sharpton was of a different sort: he believed that local blacks would not get their proper cut of the hundred million dollars. "Once it becomes clear to me that blacks are going to be excluded from sharing the pie," he said, "we are going to hit the streets and turn it into a very uncomfortable Convention for the Democrats."

Despite this ominous prospect, John LeBoutillier, a former Republican member of the House of Representatives from a Queens-Long Island district, maintained in an op-ed article in *Newsday* that 1992 could provide the perfect resolution for the Democrats' near-total domination of New York politics. Dinkins, he said, should urge the President to have the Republicans also hold their next Convention in New York. That way, LeBoutillier said, Republicans from other parts of the country would come to understand New York's problems and would encourage their party to invest more funds in the New York G.O.P., thus reviving it, to the benefit of all. LeBoutillier reminded Dinkins: "The mayors of two other world-class cities, Leningrad and Moscow, have recently seen the folly of working with just one political party."

The syndicated columnist Mary McGrory saw the Democrats' choice from still another point of view. She deplored the selection of New York instead of New Orleans, a city she associated with having fun; it showed, she said, that the Democrats had been so beaten down over the years that they "don't know how to have a good time anymore." She wrote, "New York City is going through a period when it would be better off to go to its room and think things over instead of having company. Overcrowded New York doesn't even like the people who live there and profess to love it. It despises strangers. It regards politeness as weakness."

Not all the high spirits are in New Orleans, as it turns out. On July 19th, Cuomo signed a new state law that provided for the seizure of assets of accused drug dealers. Since it was a fine, sunny day, the ceremony was held outside, at Pier 36, on the East River. With the Governor were Police Commissioner Brown and Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau. A young woman in a passing boat, taking note of the distinguished gathering, undid the top of her bikini and waved it exuberantly around, and then, stripping off the rest of her outfit, mooned the Governor. Cuomo's head did a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn as the boat sped away. "In Queens, that never would have happened, I guarantee it," he said. "For fifty years, we've been coming to Manhattan for excitement." Let's be honest—it's safe to say that it has been more years than that since the last mooning of a governor of this state.

—ANDY LOGAN

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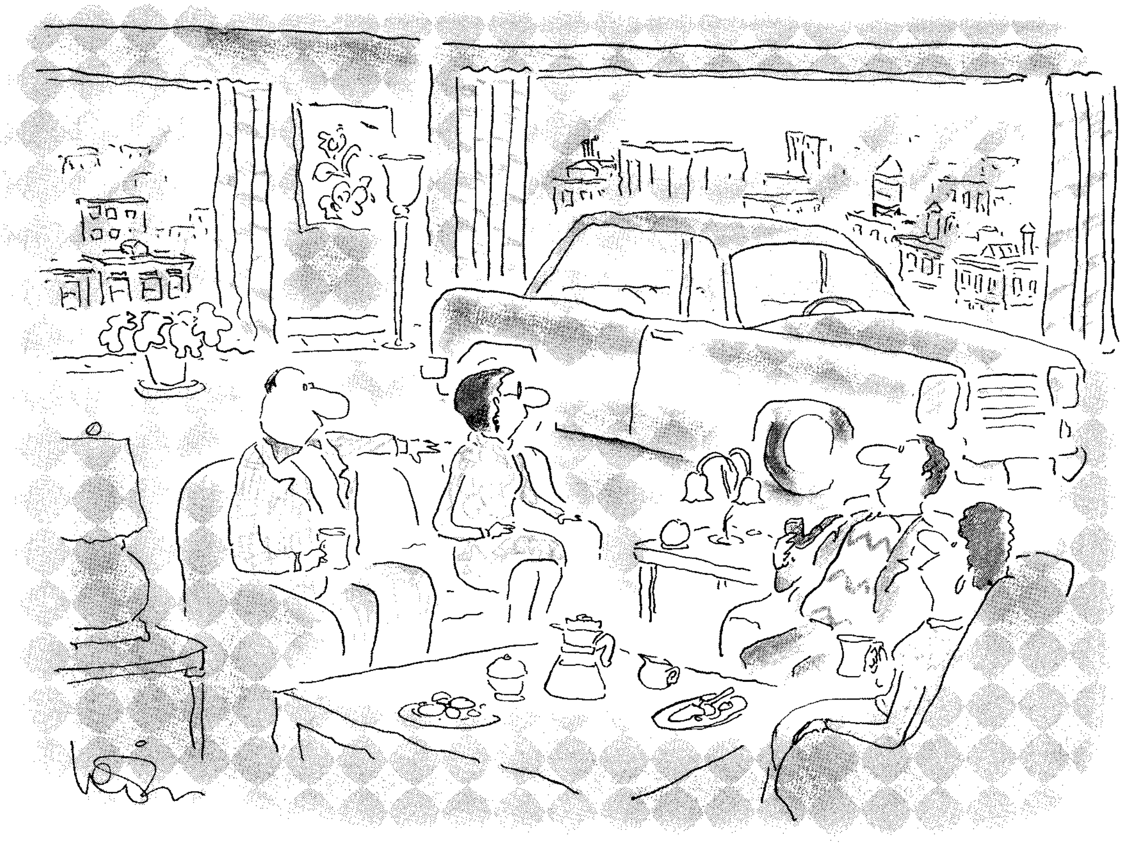
THE reign of King George VI lasted for little more than fifteen years, yet his death, in February of 1952, was greeted with shocked surprise, genuine sorrow, and widespread grief—feelings that were much more than a Pavlovian reaction to the passing of just another monarch. In England, he was sincerely mourned as George the Good, George the Faithful, even George the Well Beloved, and Winston Churchill caught the public sense of personal loss in a vibrantly emotional eulogy, which even he had never surpassed. The French Ambassador, René Massigli, reported to his Foreign Minister that "George VI was a great King, and perhaps a very great King." In the United States, the House of Representatives passed a resolution of sympathy, and the Los Angeles *Times* affirmed that "Great Britain's sorrow will find an echo all over the civilized world." So, indeed, it did. India's Parliament adjourned for two days as a mark of respect to its last king-emperor, and one Australian M.P. declared, with homely directness, "We have lost a great bloke." And in describing the King's lying-in-state at Westminster Hall with measured and stately phrases that only in retrospect seem implausibly hyperbolic, Richard Dimbleby, the BBC commentator, said, "The sunset of his death tinged the whole world's sky."

Yet when George VI acceded to the British throne, in December of 1936, no one could have imagined that his reign would turn out half so well. For one thing, its beginning came at the end of the unprecedented Year of Three Kings, during which the death of George V, in January, had been followed by the sensational abdication of his eldest son, Edward VIII. It was widely believed that the monarchy had been severely damaged, and it was not at all clear that the new king was the man to restore its prestige. Lamentably ill-educated, afflicted with poor health, devoid of presence or glamour, and further hampered by overwhelming shyness and a debilitating stammer, George VI was initially greeted with a muted enthusiasm verging on resentful disappointment. It was rumored, variously, that he would die before the coronation, that he would not be able to survive such a protracted and gruelling ceremony, that he was simply not up to the job. And there can be no doubt that, in his darkest moments, this last anxiety was one that the unhappy and reluctant King himself fully shared. How, then, did a reign that began so tentatively end so triumphantly? What exactly was King George VI's contribution to the modern British monarchy? And what, if anything, was his broader contribution to modern British history?

Until very recently, only one book had even indirectly addressed these questions: the official biography, "George VI: His Life and Reign," by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, published in 1958. The author admitted to being a "staunch and romantic monarchist," and to having become in the course of his work "a sincere admirer" of the late king. Indeed, he once likened royal biography to matrimony—an enterprise "not to be entered into inadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." Predictably, he produced a work that was massive in bulk but unrevealing in content. Apart from some heartfelt remarks on the King's speech impediment (Wheeler-Bennett was a fellow-sufferer, and had even been to the same therapist), his book was the history of an icon rather than of an individual. Its tone was courtly, tactful, almost obsequious, its prose ripe and heavy to the point of prolixity. And how could it have been otherwise? George VI had been dead scarcely five years. His elder brother was still very much alive, and for the Royal Family



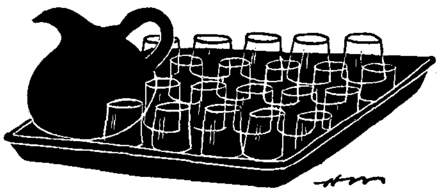
"When we moved back into the city, we decided to keep the car."

the abdication remained a subject of controversy, embarrassment, and annoyance. Most of the official archives were as yet unavailable, and men like Harold Macmillan, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Jawaharlal Nehru, with whom the King had had dealings, were still active public figures.

The result, then, was a biography that did not probe very deeply into the King's private life, into the workings of the monarchy as an institution, or into the sovereign's place in the history of his country and empire. Insofar as Wheeler-Bennett made any attempt at analysis, he did so almost entirely in terms of that vague yet vital concept, so beloved of the British upper classes, "character." The key to understanding the life and reign of George VI, he maintained, was that the monarch was a decent, dignified, and dutiful man. His virtues were the unostentatious qualities of the English country gentleman: he was high-minded in his morals, paternal in his outlook, pious in his Christianity, quiet in his courage. Thus, although not brought up in the expectation of inheriting the throne, he was well equipped to shoulder this burden when it fell upon him. And a robust common sense, a devotion to duty, an unquestioned patriotism, and an irreproachable family life also helped him to repair the damage wrought by the abdication, to restore the traditional lustre to the monarchy, and to leave to his daughter a throne probably more securely established in the hearts and minds of his subjects than it had ever been before. If George VI's reign showed anything, it was that "character" mattered most. And this was a quality that, it has become clear, the King's elder brother had conspicuously lacked.

More than a generation on, it is high time for George VI to be exhumed from this sanitized sarcophagus and considered seriously as a three-dimensional historical figure. And that is precisely how Sarah Bradford, whose previous books include a much praised biography of Disraeli, seeks to treat him in her fascinating new biography, "The Reluctant King: The Life and Reign of George VI, 1895-1952" (St. Martin's; $25). Her objective is simple and straightforward—"to provide a reappraisal in the light of our vastly increased knowledge of the period of his life and reign." To this end, she has encouraged many of the King's surviving contemporaries to talk much more frankly than they were prepared to do to Wheeler-Bennett. She has examined official archives that are now open—not just British archives but also French, German, and American. She has ransacked more than fifty collections of private papers in England and overseas, and she has worked her way through the mass of relevant memoirs and monographs that have appeared during the last three decades. And she has enjoyed one further benefit that only the passing of time could bestow: with one notable exception (of whom more later), the central figures of the abdication crisis and the King's reign are now dead. The result is that Bradford is able to provide the most candid and convincing account yet of the private life and public ordeal of this sad, successful, and ultimately sacrificial ruler.

IN its essential outlines, the story the author has to tell is already familiar. George VI was born on December 14, 1895, which for the Royal Family was the most inappropriate day of the year, the fourteenth of December being the anniversary of Prince Albert's death. His great-grandmother Queen Victoria would reign for six more years, and, as if to console her for the child's unfortunate date of arrival, he was christened Albert Frederick Arthur George. His parents, who in 1910 became King George V and Queen Mary, were shy and reserved with each other and were quite incapable of showing their children any warmth or affection. Prince Bertie (as he was known in the family) was the second son, and was from the outset overshadowed by his elder brother, Edward, the Prince of Wales, partly because Edward was the heir to the throne, and partly because he radiated charm and charisma from an early age. Besides, Bertie was knock-kneed, left-handed, and high-strung, spoke with a stammer, and was not overbright. His formal education, by Henry Hansell, an uninspired tutor, was distinctly limited, and he never developed an interest in the arts or the life of the mind. In 1913, he became a midshipman, and during the First World War he was present at the Battle of Jutland. But by then he was in almost constant pain from an undiagnosed duodenal ulcer, and he was eventually invalided out of the Royal Navy.



By the end of the war, Bertie had little to show except a discouraging record of failure and defeat, and an understandable sense of inferiority and unworthiness. But during the nineteen-twenties and thirties he gradually began to carve a small niche for himself. In 1920, his father, having already bestowed upon him the Order of the Garter, created him Duke of York, and he took to visiting factories and industrial areas—something that no other member of the Royal Family would deign to do. He established an annual camp, attended by upper- and lower-class boys, that was designed to alleviate social tensions. He brought his stammer under control, thanks to the ministrations of Lionel Logue, an Australian speech therapist, and, in 1927, went on an Australian tour, which he carried off unexpectedly well. By then, he was no longer fighting his battles alone, for in 1923 he had married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. In a life not distinguished for good luck or sound judgment, his choice of wife was a stroke of genius. She possessed many of the gifts he had been denied, being beautiful, charming, cultivated, and brilliant at public relations. And she brought him the comfort, security, and understanding that his mother had never been able to provide. She bore him two daughters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, and by the early nineteen-thirties his life at last seemed set: with his devoted wife and happy family, he could look forward to a peaceful and secure future of private tranquillity and unassuming public service.

All this was brutally and irrevocably shattered by the death of George V and the trauma of the abdication. The Duke and Duchess of York, from their prim and proper perspective, regarded the new regime of Edward VIII as the negation of everything that the monarchy stood for. The King was lax in his religious observances, cavalier in his performance of public duties, and far from assiduous (or responsible) in his attention to state papers. Even worse, he was infatuated with Wallis Simpson, an American who had divorced one husband and was soon to part with a second. Like Queen Mary, the Yorks dismissed her as an adventuress, felt that her association with the King was damaging to the prestige of the monarchy, and regarded her as totally unfit to be a member of the Royal Family. As if this were not bad enough, it suddenly emerged, in early December, that the King had decided to abdicate his throne so that he could marry her. For the Duke of York, this was a prospect almost too terrible to contemplate. It was not just that he was afraid the abdication would do untold harm to the standing of the monarchy but that, as the next brother in line, he would be obliged to take over as sovereign and to live the rest of his life in the remorseless public eye. No wonder that, as Bradford tells us, he sobbed for an hour on Queen Mary's shoulder when he learned what his fate would be.

However, the new reign began more promisingly than many had dared to hope, and the very fact that he got through the coronation at all made it something of a personal triumph. King Edward VIII (now the exiled and soon to be married Duke of Windsor) was quickly forgotten, and by taking the name George the new king made it clear that there would be a return to the traditional standards of his father's day. Thanks to the dresses of Norman Hartnell and the photographs of Cecil Beaton, the new queen was successfully packaged and presented as a crinolined romantic figure straight out of a Winterhalter painting. And royal visits to France and to North America received unprecedented media attention and did wonders for the King's morale. But both in public and in private there was a darker side to all this. In Europe, Hitler was already on the rampage. The King was a strong supporter of Neville Chamberlain and his policy of appeasement, and at the time of Munich he offered to make a direct appeal to Hitler "as one ex-Serviceman to another," a gesture that was as naïve as it was well intentioned. And there were endless squabbles with the Duke of Windsor: over the purchase of the private estates at Sandringham and Balmoral, over the allowance that the ex-king was to receive, and over the granting of the title Royal Highness to him but not to his wife.

Then came the war. As in peacetime, the King worked hard at his job—probably too hard. He refused to consider leaving the country, and, although he spent his nights at Windsor, he travelled to London each day to share the anxieties of the blitz with his subjects. As the Queen remarked, when Buckingham Palace received a direct hit it meant they could look the East End squarely in the face. He journeyed far and wide across his kingdom, consoling the many people who had been bombed out of their homes, and doing his best to keep their morale high. He provided a refuge for the Continental royalties who had been driven from their realms: King Haakon of Norway, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, and King George of Greece. And although when Churchill first became his Prime Minister the King had been distinctly unenthusiastic about him, he gave him loyal and increasingly admiring support throughout the war. Yet, for all his earnest endeavors, George VI was never really at the center of events. He was head of state and commander-in-chief, but he played no significant part in the formulation of strategy or policy, and as the symbol of the nation's resolve to defy Hitler he was inevitably outclassed and upstaged by Churchill.

Not surprisingly, the King regarded the coming of peace with barely concealed apprehension: it seemed like 1918 all over again. His fellow-sovereigns in Romania, Yugoslavia, and Italy were sent into exile. He thought the British people "ungrateful" to have rejected Churchill in his hour of triumph. He was concerned about the radical policies of the new Labour Government, and ministers like Hugh Gaitskell thought him "fairly reactionary." The royal tour to South Africa neither restored his health nor cemented the British connection, and he much deplored the independence of India and the loss of his imperial title. The Duke of Windsor continued to plague him with demands that he be given employment and that his wife be accorded royal rank, and the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Philip Mountbatten, in 1947, only made things worse. The King was much upset by the breakup of his family circle, and while this young, radiant couple seemed to hold out the hope of a brighter future George VI increasingly seemed a forlorn figure

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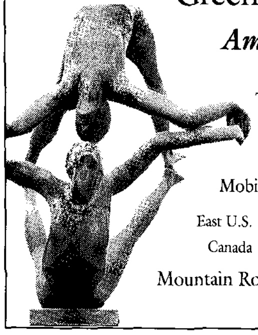

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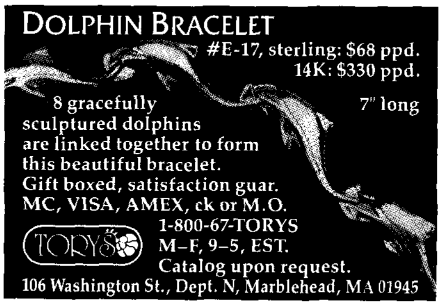

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from the past. Only a year later, he observed, "Everything is going now. Before long, I shall also have to go." By then, he was suffering from advanced arteriosclerosis, and in 1951 lung cancer was diagnosed. (The King himself was never told of it.) Appropriately, this most domestic of sovereigns died in his sleep, from a coronary thrombosis.

SUCH is Bradford's accomplished account. Does it also provide the more fundamental "reappraisal" that she promises in her introduction? Beyond any doubt, the monarch and his reign come alive to a much greater degree than they did in Wheeler-Bennett's reverential book. To begin with, Bradford vividly conveys the extraordinary nature of royal existence and of kingly attitudes. The austerities of war and of peacetime reconstruction meant that courtly ritual was much less elaborate than it had been in his father's day. Even so, George VI lived a life of cosseted privilege which is scarcely imaginable by lesser mortals. Despite his much publicized knowledge of the factory floor (for which, as it happens, Bradford advances very little evidence), he knew next to nothing about how most of his subjects lived, and his prescriptions for promoting industrial peace and ending the class war were superficial in the extreme. Like most monarchs, George VI was obsessed with medals and decorations, clothes and uniforms, precedent and protocol. He rebuked General Montgomery, the victor of Alamein, for wearing a beret rather than a peaked cap, and one of the greatest solaces of his last weeks was that he had personally designed a new style of trousers to wear with the Order of the Garter. And he was surrounded by courtiers and equerries whose world views were, if anything, even more blinkered and reactionary than his. Indeed, his two private secretaries, Alec Hardinge and Alan Lascelles, were snobbish, narrow-minded, obscurantist, and completely lacking in both flexibility and imagination.

At the same time, Bradford paints a much more persuasive portrait of the man and the monarch. We learn the true extent of the King's limited intellect: his religious beliefs were childlike in their simplicity; he rarely read a book, and he delighted in schoolboy jokes and risqué stories; and he was insensitive to art, though he was surrounded by one of the greatest private picture collections in the world. We are told much about the courageous efforts he made to discharge his kingly duties: how he strove to overcome his deep sense of inferiority, forced himself to deliver speeches and give radio broadcasts, fretted endlessly about affairs of state over which he had no effective control. ("I am very worried about . . ." was one of the most recurrent entries in his diary.) And we are given a picture of his declining years which is poignant in the extreme: as Churchill aptly put it, "the King walked with death, as if death were a companion, an acquaintance, whom he recognised and did not fear." The end result may be merely to embroider the familiar picture of unexciting worthiness, but the individual who emerges is a more human and sympathetic figure than before.

Put more positively, this means that George VI was in many ways the ideal person to take on the job of being a constitutional monarch in twentieth-century Britain. He was only residually a lawmaker, but that was fine with him, since, unlike his elder brother, he harbored no desire to assert himself in matters of high policy. He was commander-in-chief in name but not in substance, and this, too, was just as well, since his own military career had been neither glorious nor successful. And he seems to have been understandably (but excessively) dependent on three women: his mother, Queen Mary, who stood by him throughout the abdication crisis; his wife, Queen Elizabeth, whom he regarded as "the most marvellous person in the world"; and his elder daughter, whose departure from the family circle at the time of her marriage he so much regretted. Supported and sustained by three generations of firm and formidable Windsor women, George VI seems to have been the ultimate castrated male. In the British Royal Family, it has often been said, kings reigned but matriarchy ruled. Just how far this was really true we are not likely to know until at least the new century. For the King's widow, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, is still very much alive, at the age of ninety, and as long as she remains on the scene the full story of her husband's reign cannot be told, even in a book as well researched as this one.

George VI, however, was more than

just a castrated male; his even crueller fate was to be monarchy's sacrificial victim—"the proverbial sheep being led to the slaughter," as he once described himself. For it seems likely that had he not been obliged to step into his elder brother's shoes in the aftermath of the abdication he might well have lived much longer. As a substitute sovereign, he drove himself too hard, in his efforts to prove that he was up to the job, and in his desire to discharge his obligations as he understood them. These stresses of kingship meant that he smoked more heavily than ever, and the smoking undoubtedly brought on the lung cancer that hastened his passing. At the time of his death, it was widely believed that the King had given his life for his country, and in this analysis there was more than a grain of truth.

From the broader perspective of history, the King was not the only victim of the events of 1936. In addition to destroying George VI, the abdication destroyed the man who had been Edward VIII. In George's case the job he felt compelled to take on sent him to an early grave. As for Windsor, he was condemned to the living death of perpetual and meaningless exile, wearily roaming the world, growing more paranoid and more pathetic, more tanned and more tired. If either of the brothers had been formed on more heroic lines, the abdication might have assumed the dimensions of a Greek tragedy, but, since neither of them was, it never rose above the undignified level of an increasingly bitter family quarrel. Much of the interest of Bradford's book lies in her treatment of this episode. In recent years, the case for the Duke (such as it is) has been put with great force (if rather less conviction) in the many writings of the foremost English apologist for the Windsors, Michael Bloch. This book is the first to put the case for the other side in any detail. And the argument is very cogently made. According to the conventions prevailing in the nineteen-thirties, when the Church of England did not recognize divorce, Wallis Simpson was simply unacceptable, not just as the wife of the King but as a member of the Royal Family. Yet Edward not only persisted in this ill-judged venture but also kept his younger brother inexcusably in the dark while he made up his mind to abdicate. And *his* determination to put personal preference before public duty left the Duke of York with no alternative but to do exactly the opposite. Nor did Edward behave any better once he had given up the throne. Although his financial settlement was more than generous, he was constantly haggling for more money. He kept telephoning his brother and presuming to tell him how to do the job he himself had voluntarily relinquished. And he made no attempt to understand why his wife would not be given the title Her Royal Highness or received at court. In short, he never realized the magnitude or the consequences of what he had done.

Bradford devotes a sixty-eight-page chapter to Edward's reign and abdication, in which, significantly, the Duke of York himself hardly appears at all: even though the eventual outcome was that he took over the starring role, during most of the unfolding drama he was essentially a minor player. And that, in essence, remained the dominant theme throughout his subsequent reign. As king he was at the center of the public stage, but as a constitutional monarch he was by definition on the edge of events. And that dual role makes it very difficult to assess his place in history with a steady and sure eye. Indeed, the only real criticism of this book is that it makes no attempt whatsoever to do so. It is easy to see why. For all the goodness of his character and the dutifulness of his reign, the best that can be said of George VI is that he had a sort of greatness thrust upon him, beneath the weight of which he eventually collapsed. And so, as Richard Dimbleby's words tacitly acknowledged, the impact of his death was in many ways much greater than the impact of his life. At no stage in his career did he seriously make history. Instead, history happened to him. And that kind of history is just about the hardest to write—or to live.

—David Cannadine

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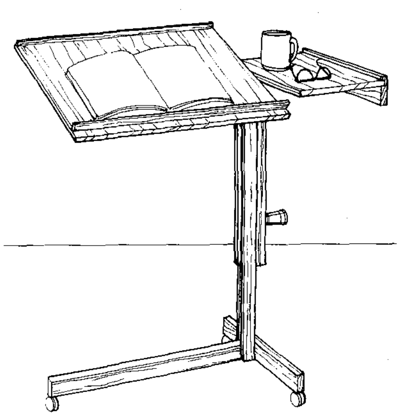

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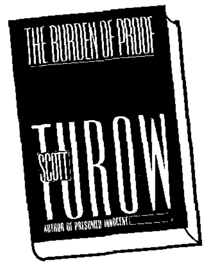

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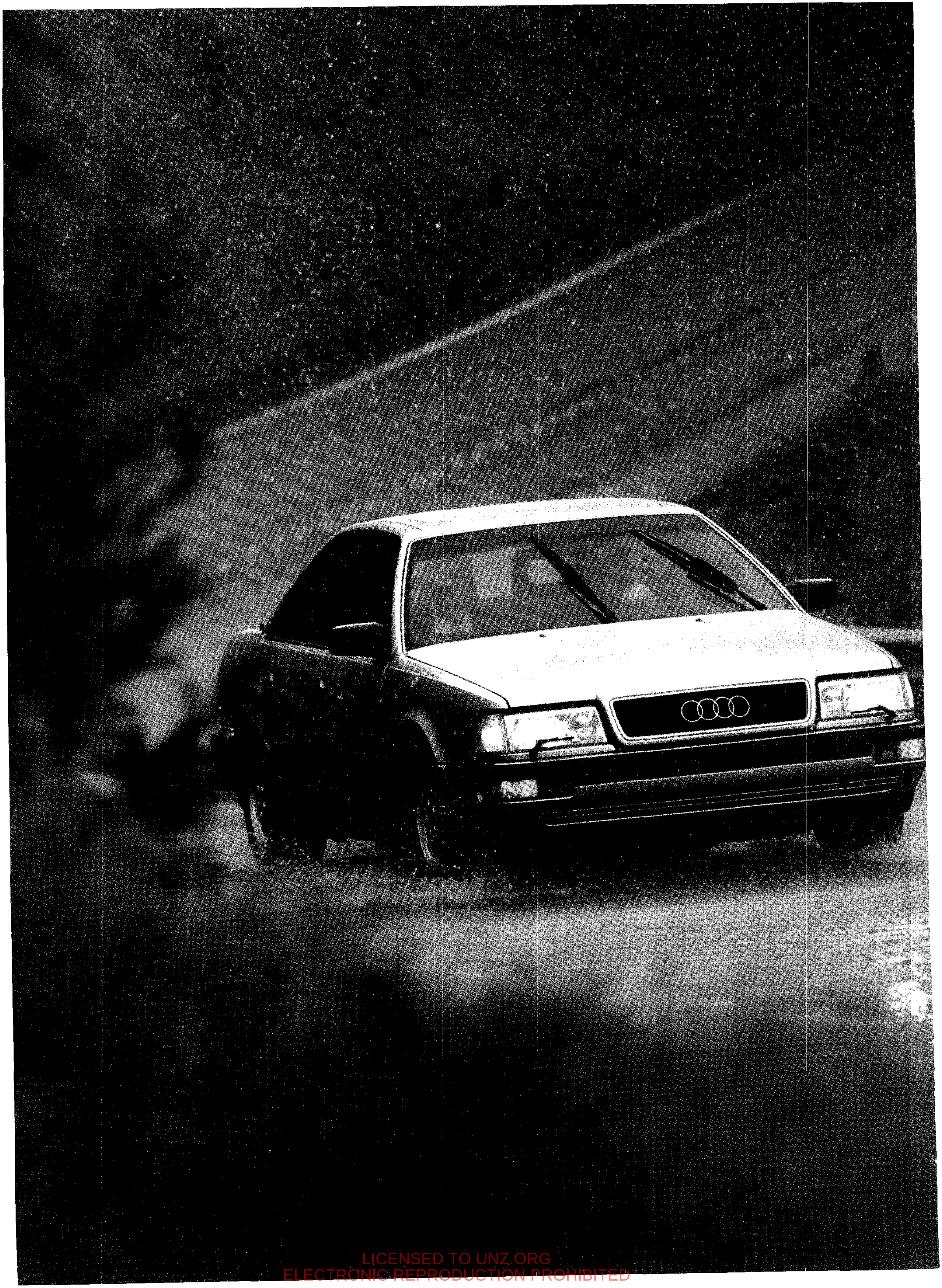

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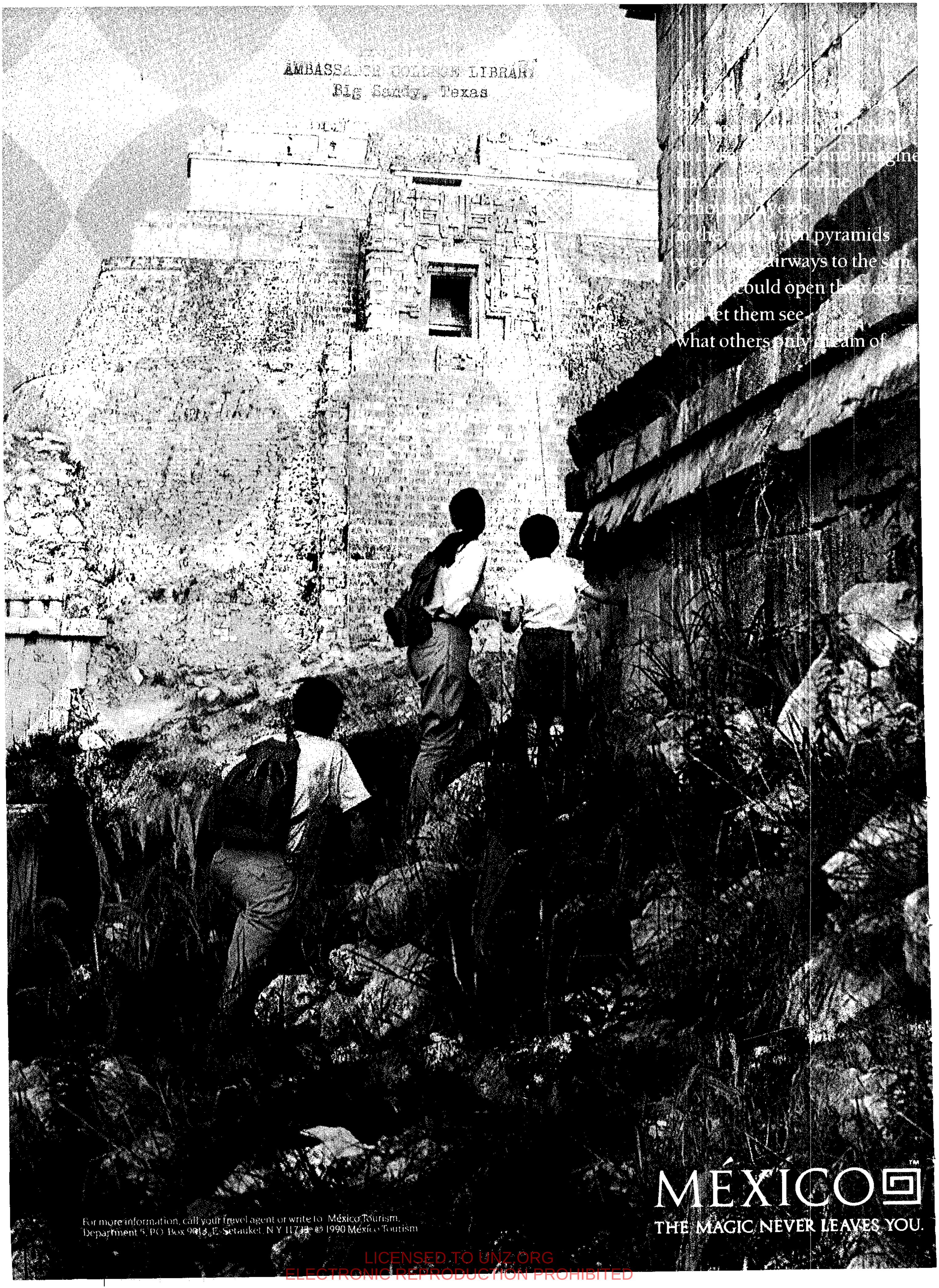

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